THE STORY OF PORT ROYAL

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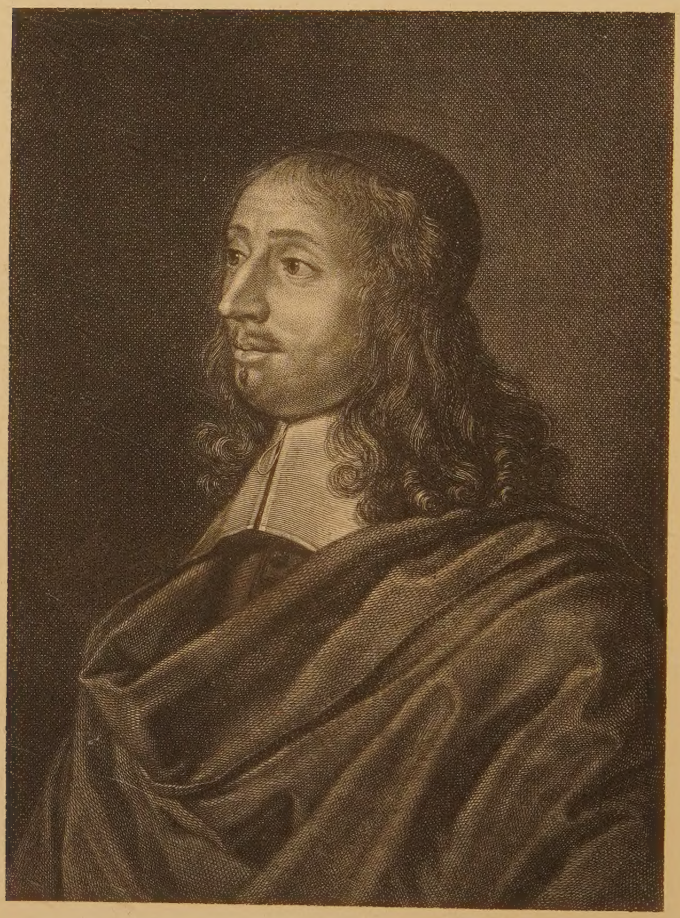

Antoine Le Maistre.

THE STORY OF PORT ROYAL

BY ETHEL ROMANES

AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF GEORGE JOHN ROMANES,"
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PREFACE

In writing this book, my purpose has been to show what kind of people, what sort of Christians, were the Port Royalists. It seems strange on reading what the true Port Royalists, as Saint Beuve would say, *les nôtres*, write on the things which pertain to the Kingdom of God—that anyone should have ever charged them with, or credited them with, tendencies to unsacramental religion, Calvinism, or any heresy which the Church has condemned. Catholics they were; Ultramontanes they were not.

Had the school of thought of which those who were known as the *gens de Port Royal, ces Messieurs de Port Royal*, were the exponents; had this school of thought been permitted to exist in the French Church, it is possible, nay probable, humanly speaking, that the fortunes of the Church of France might have been fairer. Sons might have been born of her who would have leavened her with a leaven of austerity, of learning, of devotion to Holy Scripture: a more intelligent religious laity would have arisen, who would have shared in and understood the Offices, the Divine Liturgy, the whole work of the Church, with more intelligent participation than is general among the rank and file of those who make their first Communion, and then, alas, too often drift away into unbelief.

Small reason, indeed, have we of the Anglican Communion for any boasting, but we have great cause for thankfulness that our branch of the Catholic

Church has, up to this time, been allowed, in the Providence of God, to be comprehensive of so many and so divergent schools of thought, so that men who differ strangely with each other can yet remain within her borders, kneel at the same altar, and recite a common Creed.

It would indeed be sad should the lessons of history be unheeded and this comprehensive character be misunderstood; so that, on the one hand, those who do not hold apparently any article of the Creed which relates to the person of Christ are welcomed and honoured and rewarded; and on the other, those who hold the faith, as it has been held by a united Christendom, are reviled, punished, and cast out.

Few of the many sad stories of Christian history are much sadder than is the story of Port Royal. The persecution of Port Royalists and the destruction of the Abbey were as foolish as they were criminal.

But it is ever to be remembered that no suffering can be really in vain, and no seeming defeat but carries with it an element of victory.

I cannot let this book go out into the world without some words of gratitude to those friends without whose generous help it could never have been written.

It is indeed a great joy to thank the Rev. H. T. Morgan, Vicar of S. Margaret's, Lincoln, to whom I owe so much.

Mr Morgan, whose valuable collection of books and pamphlets has lately been given by him to Keble College, Oxford, gave me free access to his books, and much advice and criticism. Those who know what his learning and judgment are will understand what this meant to a writer on Port Royal. I must thank the Rev. Dr Lock, Warden of Keble College, for his kindness in giving me permission to work in Keble College Library after Mr Morgan's books were placed there.

To the Rev. H. Milman, Librarian of Sion College, the like thanks are due for permission to use the collection of Port Royal literature which was collected

by the late Mrs Schimmelpennick, and for allowing some of the rare prints in that collection to be reproduced in my book.

It is indeed a pleasure to express my gratitude to my friend and publisher, Mr Hallam Murray, to whose patience and pains and artistic skill another of his authors desires to render heartfelt thanks.

To my friend, the Rev. Walter Hobhouse, Chancellor of the Cathedral, Birmingham, I owe true thanks for his kindness in reading the MS., and for several valuable suggestions. And, lastly, I must thank her to whom the book is dedicated, to whose unwearied patience and learning and literary judgment I am proud to own myself greatly indebted.

E. R.

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INTRODUCTION

PORT ROYAL—"Qui ne connaît pas Port Royal ne connaît pas l'humanité," said M. Royer-Collard to Port Royal's great historian, Sainte Beuve.

And this magnificent hyperbole seems amply justified to the lovers of Port Royal.

For that which is known as the Port Royalist movement represents a real spiritual awakening in the French Church, a great effort for righteousness, for spiritual religion, for a certain degree of independence of thought and action.

Thanks to the hatred of the Jesuits, to the selfish, narrow, jealous policy of Louis XIV., this movement was crushed.

But perhaps also, as we shall see, something in the Port Royal movement itself, some spirit of controversy, and of bitterness, and of zeal, not so much for truth as for their own aspect of truth, which grew up in the later days, checked the upward growth, and enabled persecution to do its work. Yet, although, as Sainte Beuve says, "Ils croient que Port Royal est un commencement; tandis que c'était trop manifestement une fin," although the very name of Port Royal was blotted out, although their enemies destroyed them and made them a reproach, their work, their sufferings, their endurance, stand out endued with the immortality which is the privilege of those who have dared to make great ventures of faith, who have stood before kings and not been ashamed, who have counted all things as nothing in comparison with truth.

Renan says, and it is a true and noble word: "For after all it is the battle, it is the struggle that is valuable more than that for which we struggle."[1] No words can better describe the interest of the story of Port Royal.

Around the monastery is grouped a number of persons who set themselves resolutely to build up spiritual religion; to bring back holiness, devotion, and a clear understanding of the need of the grace of God, the need of Jesus Christ. Sainte Beuve's *Discours Préliminaire* should be read by all who wish to understand the position of the true Port Royalists.

And the story centres round one religious establishment, for, roughly speaking, one century, and round one family. The Arnaulds with their friends and connections, *were* Port Royal. Many great names other than Arnauld are clustered round Port Royal, but they are all connected in some way with that wonderful household, through friendship or the ties of blood.

Before the Arnaulds took possession, so to speak, of Port Royal, the history of that religious house has practically no interest. After Angélique Arnauld, the great Abbess, as a tiny child of nine, is installed at Port Royal in 1602, the story becomes one of the most interesting and heartrending of the many heroic epics of human struggle, and tears and heartbreaks, of the many Acta Sanctorum of the centuries since the King of Saints bequeathed to His followers the legacy of the Cross, the privilege of drinking of His cup and of being baptized with His baptism.

We will therefore begin our story with the Arnauld family, only noting that Port Royal was a religious house founded in 1204 by Mathilde de Guirlande, wife of Matthieu de Montmorenci Marli, on the site of an ancient chapel dedicated to St Laurence. In old charters the name is Porrois. Port Royal owes the name to the legend that Philip Augustus while hunting lost his way, and was found at a small chapel in a valley, on which site he resolved to build a monastery. This,

[1] Renan's *Etudes Religieuses.*

however, is manifestly a myth, and Port Royal's founders were undoubtedly Mathilde de Guirlande aided by Eudes de Sully, the Bishop of Paris.

The monastery was under the jurisdiction of the Abbots of Cîteaux. Cîteaux (Lat. *Cistercium*), near Dijon, was chosen by St Robert, 1099, for the site of a monastery. He and some monks had left Cluny in the hopes of leading a stricter life, and one more conformed to the rule of St Benedict. Robert first settled near the borders of Champagne, at Molesme, and after a while, seeing that the new convent was well started, St Robert and six other monks travelled to what was then a wilderness—Cîteaux, and founded a new settlement of monks, who became known for their holy lives and the excessive austerity with which they carried out their rule.

To them in 1113 came the great St Bernard, and he in time let out a band to establish themselves in the place for ever connected with his name—Clairvaux.

The rule of the Cistercians was that of St Benedict; they were, in fact, Reformed Benedictines.[1]

Port Royal was built in a valley near the town of Chevreuse, eighteen miles to the west of Paris, and seems to have been a somewhat desolate spot. Madame de Sévigné once described it as "un vallon affreux tout propre à inspirer le goût de faire son salut." But we know that the eighteenth century, in France and England alike, loved a smiling country; the charm of gloomy or stern landscapes was yet to be discovered.

M. Lemaître's beautiful words may well be quoted. He says in his *Discours, Racine et Port Royal*:—

"Cette vallée de Port Royal est un des coins de la France les plus augustes, les plus imprégnés d'ame. C'est une terre sacrée. . . .

"Là ont medité et prié les âmes les plus profondes, les plus repliées sur elles-mêmes, les plus obsédées par le mystère de leur destinée spirituelle."

It must be remembered that Port Royal and all

[1] See *Histoire de Sainte Bernard et de son Siècle*, par R. P. Theodore Ratisbonne.

who can be called Port Royalists represent to us a struggle for a higher faith, a true moral standard; and that they were in no sense heretics. As has been rightly said, the Port Royalists protested against misunderstandings of their teaching, and never held the doctrine of so-called Jansenism, a doctrine which is as absurd as it is heretical. If Jesuits protest against interpretations of their teaching which seem to accuse them of something very like Pelagianism, certainly Port Royalists may protest against accusations of Calvinism.

Certainly the great book by Arnauld and Nicole on the Eucharist ought to have settled the Catholicity of Port Royal.

The words which Signor Forgazzaro puts into the mouth of his "Santo" express the principle for which Port Royal suffered. . . . "Questo difetto di corraggio morale è una piaga della Chiesa. Piuttosto che mettersi in conflitto con i Superiori ci si mette in conflitto con Dio. E si crede di sfuggire a questo sostituendo alla propria coscienza dove Dio parla, la coscienza dei Superiori. . . . Non s'intende che il debito verso Dio e il debito verso i Superiori si possono compiere insieme non operando mai contre il Bene, non astenendosi mai da operare contro il Male, ma senza giudicare i Superiori, ma obbedendo loro con perfetta obbedienza în tutto che non è contro il Bene o a favore del Male, deponendo ai loro piedi la propria vita stessa, solo non la coscienza; la coscienza. Mai!"

Could anything better sum up what was meant by Port Royal resistance; everything could be yielded, but to refuse to listen to the final voice of Conscience, never!

PORT ROYAL

CHAPTER I

EARLY DAYS (1591-1618)

THE Arnauld family existed in Provence as far back as the twelfth century. Mention is made of one of them in 1195. The family subsequently settled in Auvergne, and the great-grandfather of Mère Angélique was ruined by his devotion to the Constable de Bourbon, who had renounced his country and his honour, and had deserted from Francis I. to Charles V., King of Spain, 1523. It will be remembered that the Constable de Bourbon, "le dernier des grands vassaux," as Henri Martin calls him, had conspired against Francis I. with Charles V., and indirectly with Henry VIII. of England. Francis I. was warned, Bourbon fled.

The characteristics which belong to the race of Auvergne are certainly found in the Arnauld family as it appeared in the seventeenth century: strength, astuteness, chivalry, religious devotion, and above all, uprightness.

The first Arnauld who settled in Paris was Antoine de la Mothe[1] Arnauld, son of that Henri who sheltered the Constable de Bourbon in his escape.[2] He held the office of Procureur Général (which may be defined as Public Prosecutor) under Catharine de' Medici, and, as

[1] La Mothe, a castle near Riom.

[2] He held the office of Grand Ecuyer to the Constable, and it is said he facilitated the escape by having the fugitive's horses shod backwards.

was not unnatural in the middle of the sixteenth century and in a country desolated by "the Wars of Religion," he was alternately a man of war and a man of law. As his grandson, M. Robert d'Andilly (brother of Mère Angélique), apologetically remarks, "M. de la Mothe was drawn by the devices of the devil into the errors of the Reformation, but he had no sooner realised the poison concealed under the semblance of religion than he at once renounced his errors and lived and died in the purity of the Catholic Faith."

M. de la Mothe had every opportunity of seeing how unwholesome the Huguenot belief was, as he just escaped with his life at the Massacre of St Bartholomew. Catharine de' Medici had no wish to lose a valuable servant, and sent an officer and some of her private guards to get him out of his house, which was being besieged by the murderers and was being defended by M. de la Mothe with true Arnauld courage. He was rescued and concealed until the massacre was over. It is needless to remark that the Jesuits never forgot this temporary lapse into heresy on the part of the ancestor of the hated Antoine Arnauld.

M. de la Mothe married twice, and became the father of thirteen children. He died in 1585. His eldest son, the only son of his first marriage, Jean de la Mothe, was a distinguished soldier, attached to the Royal cause, and to Henri III. against the House of Guise. He fell fighting in Auvergne against the League. M. d'Andilly relates how M. de la Mothe and twenty-four men had defended a town until their ammunition had given out, and how he then surrendered to save his men's lives, but having seen his soldiers march out, he threw himself sword in hand amongst the enemy, declaring, "La Mothe will not owe his life to the League."

The eldest of the children of the second marriage was Antoine, the great lawyer, the father of Mère Angélique and of "tous les nôtres de Port Royal," as M. de Sainte Beuve says. He succeeded to his

father's office of Procureur Général, and in all respects he seems to have been an excellent specimen of the "Gens de la Robe." He was eloquent and learned in the learning of the sixteenth century, and his discourses read quaintly enough, with their appeals to precedents extending backwards as far as the *Iliad* and to old writers of Roman law, great and small.

M. Arnauld owed his wife to his eloquence. M. Marion, an illustrious lawyer, "avocat général du Roi, dont le nom est si connu dans toute la France," heard the young lawyer plead, and very soon bestowed on him his only daughter Catherine. She brought to her husband the estate of Andilly (from which her eldest son Robert always bore the name of M. d'Andilly), and also a number of desirable connections, whom M. d'Andilly dutifully recounts.

M. Marion was also eloquent, and it was said, "M. Marion est le premier du Palais qui ait bien écrit"; as the great historian of Port Royal says, this was a good omen for the strong masculine healthy style which was to characterise the Arnaulds descended from the Marions.

M. Marion was not quite so devout as M. Arnauld, and did not escape the reproach of being slightly unorthodox; he certainly felt no qualms concerning the rather questionable arrangements made by him and by M. Arnauld for the establishment of his two granddaughters, to be known hereafter as Mère Angélique and Mère Agnès.

It seems odd that this very worldly and astute old lawyer should have been the means of paving the way for as pure and as unworldly a reform as the world has ever seen. Not the worst enemies of Port Royal could accuse it of over-much care for the rich, or for the great ones of the earth.

From all one hears of Catherine Arnauld, one feels that she must have been a sweet, good, and devout woman, an excellent wife and mother; she married, poor little bride, at the mature age of twelve, her bridegroom being twenty-five. Their marriage seems

to have been a very happy one. There was growing prosperity and much Court favour. M. Arnauld was strongly attached to Henri IV.

The home life seems to have been very happy. M. Arnauld was a tender father, and M. Marion the ideal grandfather of the patriarchal type. (He died in 1610.) Family affection was very strong in the Arnaulds, as we shall see again and again.

Of the twenty children borne by Catherine, ten died in childhood. The survivors were: the eldest, Robert, born in 1589, of whom we shall have much to say; Catherine, afterwards Mme. Le Maître, born in 1590; the famous Jacqueline Marie, known in Religion as Angélique; two years later, Jeanne Catherine Agnès, our dear and lovable Mère Agnès; Anne Eugénie, afterwards a nun at Port Royal; Henri, afterwards Bishop of Angers; Marie de St Claire, a nun of Port Royal; Simon, who was killed at Verdun in 1639; Madeleine, afterwards a nun at Port Royal; and last, but certainly not least, Antoine, born 1612, the great Arnauld, as he is emphatically named.

Robert, known in later life as M. d'Andilly, has left us a pleasing account of the relations which existed between his father and himself. He says that they had no secrets from each other, and that God had used his father to inspire him with the wish to do right.[1]

The chief legal event of M. Arnauld's life was undoubtedly that which was wittily termed "le péché original des Arnaulds," an attack on the Jesuits in consequence of the attempted assassination of Henri IV. The University of Paris by M. Arnauld's mouth pleaded for the expulsion of the Jesuits "qui n'en aimoient pas mieux ces Messieurs de P. Royal," as was remarked. It was a wonderful burst of denunciation, and was neither forgotten nor forgiven.

The young Arnaulds had seven uncles on their father's side, all more or less distinguished, for one or two of whom M. d'Andilly seems to have felt a special affection. The youngest, Pierre, was a really

[1] *Mémoires d'Andilly*, i., p. 316.

distinguished soldier, known as M. Arnauld du Fort.[1] M. Sainte Beuve says of him: "He is a true specimen of the Arnauld family *in its unconverted state*, brave, audacious, dashing, and rather brutal." Pierre shared the fatality which, as M. d'Andilly says, attended the whole Arnauld family. They always just came short of any complete worldly success. M. du Fort died in 1624, during the siege of La Rochelle, when he was on the point of becoming a Marshal of France. He had formed a scheme for taking the town, which he communicated to Louis XIII.; this scheme was frustrated by the jealousy of a rival, and Arnauld's fatal illness was brought on by disappointment and fatigue. Another brother of M. Antoine Arnauld, Isaac, became "Intendant des Finances"[2] in 1605; for him Robert d'Andilly had a great affection.

The family of M. Arnauld (les nôtres) was large, and both M. Marion and M. Arnauld felt it desirable to make provision for some of the numerous daughters. It was usual in French families that one or more of the girls should be dedicated to the cloister from babyhood, if with vocation so much the better, but with or without vocation, dedicated. The second and third daughters, Jacqueline Marie (Angélique), born 1591, and Jeanne Catherine de Sainte Agnès, born 1593, were thus devoted, and to all outward appearance poor little Angélique was not in the least disposed to "enter Religion."

Agnès, known in the world as Jeanne, was contented to become a nun, but not an Abbess; Angélique, on the other hand, finding that her grandfather, of whom she was very fond, had set his heart on establishing her in the cloister, said resignedly: "Very well—only I *must*

[1] He was so named from Fort St Louis, an outwork erected by him against La Rochelle.

[2] The Intendants were financial agents, especially concerned with the raising of the "Taille" or property tax. Richelieu appointed Intendants in every province in 1637, in whose hands the whole political, financial and police administration was placed.—See Wakeman, *Ascendancy of France*, p. 157.

be an Abbess"; and a little while after, "I'll make my nuns do their duty."

M. Marion had contrived to persuade the good-natured, not over-scrupulous King Henri to grant him the succession to two Abbeys for the two little grand-daughters—Port Royal for the elder, and St Cyr for little Agnès.

The Abbess of Port Royal at that time was Jeanne de Boulehart. She made no objection to the reception of the little Jacqueline (Angélique) as a coadjutor Abbess; indeed we are told that the good Jeanne in a spirit of prophecy exclaimed to her nuns, "You don't know what an excellent arrangement I have made for you to-day."

Angélique said that there were three abuses in the way in which she had been established at Port Royal.

The first was her grandfather's (M. Marion's) ambition to have two of his grand-daughters Abbesses.

The second was that she was professed as Abbess at eleven, in defiance of Church rules.

The third was the deceit practised on the Pope; it was falsely stated that she was seventeen years old.

Angélique also blames the then Superior, the Abbot of Cîteaux, in that he assented to these plans.

As for St Cyr, a certain nun was to hold it until Jeanne (Agnès) was old enough.

The little girls were clothed as novices in 1599 and 1600 respectively, having arrived at the mature ages of nine and eight. The two little novices were brought up together at St Cyr, and quarrelled and played much like ordinary children. Jacqueline, however, was soon removed to the Abbey of Maubuisson to be educated. On Michaelmas Day, 1600, she was confirmed, and took the name, one day to become so famous, of Angélique. The reason for this change was that difficulties had been made at Rome about granting Bulls to so youthful an Abbess; and a change of name was thought advisable on renewing the request. She was solemnly professed as a religious in October, 1600.

For the present we may say that Maubuisson was a

fair example of the worst side of the decay of Religous Life. Port Royal represented the cold, worldly, but decorous religious house. Maubuisson, on the other hand, presented the sight of a scandalous and corrupt establishment.

Into this scene strangely enough our little Angélique was plunged. Madame D'Estrées, the Abbess, was the sister of the famous Gabrielle D'Estrées, and had been foisted on Maubuisson simply to gratify Gabrielle. Henri IV. played a mean trick on the then Abbess, who had been elected on account of her purity and goodness. The King paid her a surprise visit, learned that the election had not been confirmed, and left the unsuspicious Superior in the complete conviction that her late Royal guest was minded to confirm her election, from which pleasant dream she was rudely roused; the King obtained a Bull from Rome, bestowed the place on Madame D'Estrées, on which the poor Abbess hastened back to her original Convent. The King promptly held a Chapter of the unfortunate nuns, who of course had but one choice. Madame D'Estrées was worthy of her Royal patron and of her sister.

Angélique always regarded her Profession as valid and binding. In early years, great as was her desire, for some time, to break with her Religious Life, she was always restrained, partly, no doubt, by the warm affection she had for her parents, but partly by a strong feeling that her vows had been made before God and were irrevocable. She said, many years afterwards, to her brother Antoine Arnauld: "Once I had taken my vows when I was nine, I could never get it out of my head that I was obliged in conscience to have no other spouse than Jesus Christ. For I regarded this vow, not as a gift which I had made to Him, and which I was not yet capable to give, on account of my age, but as an extreme honour which He had done me to take me as His daughter and His bride, and I considered that I should indeed deserve reproof if I withdrew from so honourable an estate. But in spite of all this I did not live like a true religious, for I was not converted until I was seventeen."

Angélique remained about two years in Maubuisson, of which Convent we shall have much to say later on. In 1602 Madame de Boulehart, Abbess of Port Royal, died, and her young coadjutor Abbess, who was then eleven years old, returned to her Convent and was warmly welcomed by her nuns.

M. de la Croix, head of the Cistercian Order, under whose jurisdiction the Abbey had been placed from its foundation, solemnly professed the new Abbess, as Abbess, on Michaelmas Day, 1602. She made on that day her first Communion.

For this, the most solemn day of a youthful life, there appears to have been absolutely no preparation. Some one slipped into Angélique's hands a little book of devotion, which she read with great attention, and she speaks of that day as one on which she did realise the presence of God.

We in England are sometimes shocked at the accounts of the hasty preparation, or the entire lack of preparation, bestowed on candidates for Confirmation in former generations. Our brethren of another Communion do not seem to have fared much better at times; coldness and absence of spiritual ideals were not confined to the English Church.

Poor little Abbess! She was compelled to assume the duties of her office, and she had already received into the novitiate a girl of seventeen, who became one of the two to whom she opened her heart on the projects of reform, when those projects had ripened. The same nun (Catherine de St Paul) gave much information about these early days to Angélique de St Jean, who compiled the *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de Port Royal.*

For some years the life at Port Royal went on in the old routine: calm, respectable, a little dull, perhaps, and certainly with no over-abundance of religious zeal. Agnès, who was at St Cyr, often paid visits to her sister; at that particular period of their lives the younger sister showed more fervour than did Angélique. When she was nine, she knew the Psalter by heart, and she

was already careful to say the Offices at the right time. Angélique was by no means so exact. As far as possible she varied the monotony by reading Plutarch. (Plutarch was much in vogue then both in England and France, and romances of the kind which had so strongly influenced Shakespeare and other writers, for the seventeenth century was the age in which story-telling came into fashion.)

She also paid and received as many visits as she possibly could, and the pious soul of her mother was a good deal exercised by the free and easy and altogether *unconventual* life of the poor young Abbess. Her mother feared greatly that Angélique might be led into indiscretions, by no means uncommon in those days. And indeed the life of the young Abbess was extraordinarily free, and one can quite understand Mme. Arnauld's fears.

But Angélique's temptations were not of the sort which could lead to any sort of scandal, and the Abbot of Cîteaux was quite satisfied when he made a visitation of the Convent in 1605. Port Royal was pre-eminently at that time a home of peace and quiet. Offices were said more or less punctually, and "convenable" amusements, chiefly games of cards and walks abroad, filled up the calm, uneventful days. A delightful life for an old lady of sixty, but for a healthy girl of fourteen what an existence! It is not wonderful that Angélique fell a prey to what, when one reads about it in the *Mémoires*, looks extremely like the particular disease of monasteries, "accedia." She herself says that she only enjoyed playing, chattering, amusing herself, and that she was vexed to see that her elder sister Catherine (who used to pay visits to Port Royal before her marriage) was more devout than the Abbess herself.

The Religious Life grew daily more distasteful; she entered into correspondence with some Huguenot aunts (we remember that M. Arnauld the grandfather of "les nôtres" had in a temporary aberration embraced the Reformed Religion, and had found in the St Bartholomew a complete cure and antidote for the

poison of heresy). She had even some idea of taking refuge at La Rochelle, which was as yet the Huguenot "City of Refuge."

She fell ill in 1607, and her father and mother carried her off to their home in Paris. Here, the atmosphere of home restored her mental balance, as far as any inclination to the "Religion"[1] was involved; but the pleasant comings and goings in her home, the uncles who were in the midst of all the excitement and interests of the life at Court, the intercourse with "mondaines," the intoxicating air of Paris, doubled the longings for a life in the world, a life of action and enjoyment. The revolt was so natural, so healthy; it indicated the strength as yet stored up and lying dormant in the future Mère Angélique!

She would not have been the great woman she became had she not known what it is to renounce the world. A little feminine touch is naively related in the *Mémoires* —that our dear young Abbess contrived to get hold of and wore a corset for some little time, in order to improve her youthful figure!

M. Arnauld found out that at sixteen Angélique was not yet the devout or even the resigned religious that he wished her to become. As we shall see later, he did not want any extremes of piety, but he did want his daughter to accept the provision he had obtained for her. M. Arnauld is an excellent type of the "make-the-best-of-both-worlds sort of Christian," at least in this period of his life; as M. Sainte Beuve says in one of his inimitable phrases, both M. Arnauld and his father-in-law were "Chrétiens, mais des Chrétiens selon le monde; et le monde, sauf les modes et les apparences, se retrouve toujours et parle un peu le même." As he was slightly distrustful of his daughter's frame of mind, and as he knew perfectly well that she could, if she would, return to the world, M. Arnauld insisted one day on Angélique's signing a paper without reading it, which she did, her heart swelling with

[1] Term always applied to the Reformed Faith in France by Huguenots.

rebellion. It was a ratification of her vows. Little did he know to what he was devoting her.

She speaks with extreme tenderness of her mother's care for her at this time. But Angélique returned after her illness to her Convent, still somewhat of an invalid. The winter of 1607 passed away, and the Lent of 1608 drew on, the Lent which was to change her whole life. The child of sixteen, who was in germ already a saint, who was already showing by her obedience and submission the possibilities of saintliness to be hereafter developed, languidly asked for a book of devotions, and a simple little book was put into her hands which seemed to have comforted her.

At last the day of awakening arrived. A Capuchin monk, who was by no means a saintly person, arrived one day in March and asked permission to preach. That sermon struck an answering note in the young Abbess's heart. She says herself in touching words: "God spoke to me, and from that instant I realised the blessedness of the Religious Life. My happiness in it was in proportion to my former unhappiness."

It is very striking and suggestive to note by what apparently unworthy instruments Angélique was brought to the life of complete self-surrender. Her father forced her, from worldly motives, to a life which affords possibilities of as great happiness or of as great misery as does the vocation of marriage. The monk who awoke her slumbering soul was a bad man, who afterwards abandoned his religious profession. In all ages souls who are destined for great vocations are often drawn upwards in strange and contradictory ways.

Now began a period of fervour, and, as was only natural, of uneasiness. The life of a religious ought to be one of austerity, of obedience to rule, of poverty. Where was the mark of the Cross on Port Royal?

Angélique was a true convert. She sought to reform herself, and with as little outward help as any fervent youthful disciple ever received, she began those inward

struggles, those stern dealings with herself which distinguish most learners in the school of the Cross.

And there was the shrinking from observation, the shyness, which are so characteristic of holy souls in their first beginnings. She used to get up at night and steal to a barn that she might pray alone. "I began to feel also," she says, "a passionate horror for my own office, for the authority with which I had been invested; I longed to leave it." Angélique was much shocked at the time by reading in a book of casuistry that an Abbess could use a third part of the revenues of the Abbey for her own private pleasure. She longed to enter some other order, and become a lay sister, to take the lowest place, rather than to reform her own convent.

At Whitsuntide, a certain Père Bernard, another Capuchin monk, dissuaded her from leaving. She confided to him her desire to reform Port Royal, and the good Father much preferred that the young Abbess should stay where she was, and proceeded to preach a discourse sufficiently severe to alarm the nuns, who thought that, as they led a decorous life, and discharged their religious duties with regularity (and also with a due regard to convenience, Matins being said at 4 P.M., not A.M.), they had no need for this sort of plain speaking.

Père Bernard, in all the zeal of a new reformer, hastened to inform the authorities at Cîteaux; this was extremely simple of him, for the then Abbot was given rather to relaxing the rule than to enforcing it.

It was notified to M. Arnauld that Angélique had become inconveniently religious. He hastened to Port Royal and found her unwell and sad. He told her with an amusing *naïveté* that he would not stand Capuchin monks in *his* Monastery, and strongly objected to any unrestrained display of religious zeal.

He carried her off to his country house, but this year was very different from the last. One idea alone possessed the ardent loyal soul—the passionate wish to put God's service first. As is very often the case in a true vocation, the words were fulfilled, "a man's foes

shall be they of his own household." As she herself says, she was dedicated to the Religious Life without any choice; and when God in His mercy had bestowed on her a true vocation, her own people did their uttermost to prevent her from leading the life of a religious.

Back to Port Royal she returned, not knowing what to do, how to reconcile her duty and her affection. All Saints' Day came, and with it came another religious; not a Capuchin monk, but one selected by the authorities at Cîteaux themselves. He preached from the Gospel of the day, on the seventh Beatitude. A girl who waited on the Abbess, and who afterwards became a nun, said to her quite simply: "You might be one of the blessed who are persecuted for righteousness' sake." The words went home like a dart. Advent came, and with it Angélique took her next decisive step. She made a general confession to this same monk, who was known afterwards as the Abbé Vauclair. He confirmed her in her resolutions, and her promise—made as before God—to live the life of a true religious.

But what between attacks of ague and religious struggles, Angélique brought herself to such a pass that the Prioress, who was next in authority to herself, came to her and implored her to say what was grieving her. "Madam," said the Prioress, "if you will only tell us what we are to do, we will do it; anything to make you happy."

Angélique took the good Prioress at her word. The first thing to do was to restore the practice of having all things in common; in fact, to keep the vow of poverty. The enthusiasm of the young Abbess for the true Religious Life had kindled something of a like spirit in the others, and everything was brought into the common stock.

There is a quaint little story of one aged nun who could not bring herself to sacrifice a little garden which she had acquired, and which she kept pretty well to herself. For some time she held out, but at last she

yielded, and sent the key of her garden, much in the spirit of one who surrenders the last tower of a besieged fortress — it was indeed the key of her heart.

Angélique herself practised all sorts of austerities, slightly absurd ones, but as she said in after years, "Que voulez vous? tout étoit bon en ce tems-la."

Somehow or other the news of the girl Abbess of seventeen who had begun the work of reforming her Monastery was noised abroad in the neighbouring Religious Houses, the inmates of which naturally took a good deal of interest in one another's affairs; and two nuns, fired with the desire of becoming Mère Angélique's children, obtained permission to leave their own Convent and enter Port Royal.

But there was another point to be gained; and this time the fight was harder, for it was not with nuns, all more or less ready to yield, and some of whom were already devoted to the Abbess, but it was with her father, the astute man of law, whose strong will would be surely able to overpower the girlish reformer.

Seclusion, that is, absolute withdrawal from the world, such *was* the Port Royal rule, in common with other Religious Houses. The rule might be inconvenient, or harsh, or unnatural, but it *was* the rule; and the question was, Would Angélique be able to convince her father and her family, who regarded Port Royal as the peculiar property of the Arnaulds, that the rule must be obeyed even to the exclusion of the relations of the Abbess?

M. Arnauld had forced his daughter into a life which involved a very real forsaking of her father's house. He had completely forgotten the original purpose and the ideal of the Religious Life; he had profaned that ideal by compelling two children to take vows at an age when they knew nothing of what they were forsaking. Angélique disconcerted him by taking her vows seriously, by making the discovery that

Christians often make—that words have meanings, and that the world, even in its most amiable guise, is at the last the enemy of the Christian. The resistance Angélique offered was right. Her own father had given her to the cloister just as he might have given her in marriage. She was compelled to resist her nearest and dearest if she would live a life of truth, not a living lie. This devotion to truth is perhaps that which characterises all Port Royalists. Austere, they were uncompromising, perhaps a little harsh and hard, but always with their eyes on Truth, their hearts fixed on the Eternal. "Paratum cor meum, Deus," they might have said.

Of course, for those who consider that the "Religious Life"[1] has no place in the Church, and that there are no calls to "forsake *all*," Mère Angélique, and all other religious, are merely mistaken and unfortunate people. But the revival of the Religious Life in all its forms in our branch of the Church, and also of the perception that, whether in the world or in the cloister, God *must* come first, which is experienced in our own and in other branches of the Church of God, is among the great marks of life which, amid all the storms of controversy, gladden the hearts of those who "pray for the peace of Jerusalem."

But, to return: Angélique knew that the crisis must come. It is, by the way, amusing to note that M. Arnauld, who was doing his best to get Angélique's election properly confirmed at Rome, sent in an account of the reform which his daughter was establishing at Port Royal: "ce cher" M. Arnauld—he had a very large share of the wisdom of the serpent.

But the "Parlement"[2] of Paris was about to suspend its sittings; M. Arnauld would be able to resume his visits to the Abbey.

[1] This phrase is merely used for convenience sake.

[2] It is scarcely needful to remind our readers that the Parlement was "a court of law, which had grown into a corporation of lawyers and judges, and which claimed an indirect veto on the Royal legislation." —Wakeman, *Ascendancy of France*, p. 5.

Already Angélique had told her Community that from henceforth the "parlour" of the Convent would alone be available for visitors, and this regulation was carried out at the "Clothing" of a novice.

As the day drew near when Angélique might reasonably expect a visit, she wrote either to her mother or to her elder sister (it is a little uncertain which), and told simply but resolutely of her intention. No one ventured, at first, to speak of this to M. Arnauld. Probably they felt as if a dove had flown in their faces. Whether M. Arnauld was told or not is not quite clear, but at any rate a visit was arranged, and a large family party set out to Port Royal, consisting of M. and Mme. Arnauld, the eldest son, known as M. d'Andilly, Mme. Le Maître, the eldest daughter, and the young sister Anne.

At Port Royal were not only Angélique, but her sister Agnès, whom she had brought to Port Royal from St Cyr; also a little sister of nine years, Marie Claire.

This was the famous Journée du Guichet, a day which, as M. Sainte Beuve says, was a mixture of tragedy and comedy, and which was assuredly a day much to be remembered in the annals of Port Royal. Angélique hearing that her troublesome family were expected, took care to get the keys of the Abbey into her own possession, and then retired to church to pray. The little shrinking girl with the great bunch of keys, knelt in the church, her heart palpitating at every sound—truly a heroic soul was held in the youthful frame.

It seems, perhaps, a storm in a tea cup, but it was a memorable day, that Journée du Guichet (Day of the Convent Wicket), for Angélique was after all fighting for a principle, for that principle which is always being combated by the world, the principle which underlies all religious life—that, at the last, God and not man is to be obeyed.

And one must remember that parental authority in France at that time was simply despotic. The fathers in Molière's plays, for instance, are generally unpleasing

individuals with the rights of ancient Roman fathers over their unfortunate offspring. M. Arnauld was a most kind and, for that age, indulgent father, but neither he nor his wife had had the faintest notion of any curtailment of their parental authority over Angélique. The struggle was not in the least like the mutiny of a daughter of the present day who obtains a reluctant consent to a career or a course of life which appears more or less eccentric in her parents' eyes. At any rate she will probably be sure of a good deal of sympathy from her "world." Angélique knew that the chances were that, even by the religious world, her conduct would be stigmatised as that of a "parricide"—always considered the worst of criminals in France.

And there was the elder brother Robert, who was his father's specially beloved son, clever, prosperous, getting on well at Court (he held a post under the uncle who was "Intendant des Finances"); he had been carefully educated, chiefly at home, and had always been from boyhood in the society of men of affairs and in a Court atmosphere. We shall see much of M. d'Andilly; on this famous "Journée du Guichet" he is simply the clever, prosperous, young man of the world, who will stand no nonsense from his womankind.

And so the family party proceeded on their long drive, and in due time reached Port Royal. Perhaps a little excitement was felt by the mother and the gentle, the worse than widowed, sister Catherine:[1] Angélique —would she really carry out her threats? Probably M. Arnauld had no uneasiness.

The party arrived and alighted. The great gate was shut, the grille was drawn back, and the poor little Abbess appeared, no doubt pale with fright. She implored her father to come into a small room at the side of the door—outside the precincts, where she could speak to him.

M. Sainte Beuve gives an inimitable account of this

[1] Catherine had been married to a certain M. Le Maître, from whom after some years of unhappiness she was legally separated.

memorable day. M. Arnauld was rudely awakened from his dream, and for a few moments the Furies were let loose. No epithet which French wit and French parental wrath could suggest was spared; the instant surrender of the two girls Agnès and little Marie Claire was demanded and quickly granted; they were sent out by a door leading out of the church, and were amongst the besiegers before their presence was perceived. Agnès, whom we have known as a devout, serious, ardent child, who never apparently cast backward longings to the world, added fuel to the fire. The father launched into fresh invectives when he saw her, and the grave young daughter said with unbroken calmness and with great respect, that all that Angélique had done was of necessity, and had been ordered by the Council of Trent. This utterance of the "Daniel come to judgment" provoked M. Robert intensely. "This is a nice state of things," he gasped, "Council, Canons, indeed!" it was indeed insufferable of a young sister to be so entirely in the right.

Things were at a deadlock. The poor sisters, Catherine and Anne, who were probably on Angélique's side, stood apart in agony. M. Arnauld calmed himself and regained his dignity. He ordered the horses to be put in his carriage, addressed a few words of farewell, and consented to go into the permitted room. There he implored Angélique to have some regard for her health, and proceeded to say a final good-bye. This was too much. The sense of family affection and family ties, always so intensely felt in France, and by no family more than the Arnaulds, rushed over Angélique. She had had a frightful struggle, and some victories cost more than defeats. She fainted away, and in one moment all was changed. The distracted father thought she was dead, and called on the nuns to come and attend to their poor little Abbess. But they had fled like rabbits to their burrows, and it was some time before any one of them dared to put her nose out!

But at last they came, and when Angélique opened her eyes, her first words were to implore her father not

to go away. The Abbess was carried off to her room to recover, a couch was prepared in the parlour, and to it she was borne. There a full reconciliation took place. Certainly the Arnaulds were excessively amenable to conviction. M. Arnauld appears to have seen that this was no girlish freak, no childish enthusiasm; but it is amusing to note how the whole family turned on the unlucky preacher who, by his sermon on All Saints' Day and his subsequent exhortation, had led on Angélique to her present attitude.

M. Arnauld and M. Robert d'Andilly fell on him and rent him—metaphorically—and M. Arnauld, observing that he was young for a Director, soon contrived that the Visitor and Superior, the Abbot of Cîteaux, should withdraw the too zealous monk.

Peace was restored; the Arnauld family agreed that Angélique's scruples should be respected and that things should be put in order.

It was arranged that M. Arnauld should visit the monastery to superintend the outside buildings, without coming into what were known as "des lieux reguliers"; and in time Mme. Arnauld and her daughters came and went with tolerable freedom, no doubt complying with the rules of a Religious House.

Mme. Arnauld was extremely miserable for some time: she, in her first burst of anger, had spoken unadvisedly with her lips and rashly vowed never to go near Port Royal again. But a sermon on rash oaths which she heard eleven months afterwards relieved the poor mother, and she set off immediately after dinner for Port Royal.

The Arnauld family came out exceedingly well from this "Journée du Guichet." The father, mother, children, were after the first storm of anger perfectly able to see from Angélique's point of view—no doubt from that day they began to rise above the level of the religion of a "Chrétien selon le monde;" one can trace the growth of religion in each of them.

And Angélique was willing to meet her father on every point where she could do so without compromising

her rule. For, what she was fighting for was simply the rescue of the Religious Life. If people are to be called to this Life at all, let it be a genuine call, Angélique always said; and before she could do anything she must once and for all prevent her Convent from being regarded by herself and her family as a pleasant and secure provision for herself and such members of the house as chose to avail themselves of it. After all, she had a great responsibility laid on her; she was, sorely against her will, the Head of a Religious House, responsible to God.

When obedience could be rightly practised she had practised it, but when what she conceived a higher duty called her, she saw her duty. She *chose*. Of her surely we can say:

> "Thou, patient thus, could'st rise from law to law,
> The old to the new, promoted at one cry
> O' the trump of God to the new Service, not
> To longer bear, but henceforth fight, be found
> Sublime in new impatience with the foe!
> Endure man, and obey God."[1]

It was not indeed a sharp trial crowned by the glory of an earthly death, but it was a life-long martyrdom on which Angélique entered on the "Journée du Guichet," and those splendid lines seem to describe the attitude of at any rate the earliest and the noblest of the Port Royalists.

Things went on peacefully for a time—Angélique trod the path of the Religious Life fearlessly and happily. She embraced the vow of poverty, resolving no longer to avail herself of her father's purse, and bearing all hardships with joy.

That longing to suffer which so often falls on elect souls in the first joy of conversion was hers; she was to drink to its dregs the cup of suffering—in later years God led her by paths of pain.

And her own nuns followed her lead; all went well. Only there was a sore lack of spiritual guidance.

[1] *The Ring and the Book*. "The Pope," lines 1055-60.

"Indeed that want was sorely felt in those early days of reviving religion."

In a few years a great change came over France. St François de Sâles and many others were to work wonderful things, but as yet it was only the beginning of reform.[1] The agony of the Religious Wars, the absolute degradation of the Catholic clergy were not so very distant. The great Henri IV. was not conspicuous for devotion.

But Charles de Condren, the Cardinal de Bérulle, and Jean Jacques Olier were to bring about the great revival of priestly life so closely associated with the Oratorians. St Vincent de Paul was soon to do his great work, but as yet there was much ignorance, much coldness, much need for a fresh stirring of the dry bones. Still, although the ideal director had not yet appeared, Angélique was fortunate in the priest who replaced the Father whom M. Arnauld had so soundly rated on the "Journée du Guichet."

A certain Père Archange, a Capuchin, took the charge of Port Royal. He was English; he is said to have belonged to the Pembroke family, and was an exile for his religion. There is something peculiarly attractive about "ce Père Pacifique." He was, one remembers with pleasure, probably a kinsman in some degree of our own George Herbert. He drew the Arnauld family closer to one another; his advice to Angélique was that her duty to her parents was to be second only to her duty to her God. "La religion ne détruit pas le droit naturel, ains le raffine, le confirme et l'accroit."[2]

Some years later, one of the Port Royal nuns says of Mère Angélique: "I have always perceived in her a marvellous insight in judging of things said to her (in sermons, spiritual counsel) and power of separating good from evil, and I don't think anyone ever took her in."

[1] For a good account of this in brief, see *The Revival of Priestly Life in France in the Seventeenth Century*, by Mrs Sidney Lear.

[2] *Des Lettres manuscrites*, quoted by Sainte Beuve.

Père Archange belongs, as M. Sainte Beuve remarks, to the same spiritual family as St François de Sâles. He had the admirable common sense on which we English pride ourselves.

With Père Archange were associated two others, M. Gallot and Père Eustache de Saint Paul, a friend of M. Arnauld.

A little group of sisters was now established at Port Royal — Angélique, Agnès, Marie Claire, and later Anne Eugénie.

Anne was a bright, clever girl, with no apparent vocation; in her early years, indeed, she had moments of attraction towards the Reformed Religion. She loved reading romances, and society. But at nineteen she fell ill, and vowed fervently to devote herself to God, in whichever religion pleased Him best. Shortly afterwards, on her recovery, she felt great leanings towards the Religious Life, and underwent some of those experiences of which so many ardent souls, St Theresa, St Catherine of Siena, for instance, furnish examples, of that mysterious upward drawing which causes them to speak of things unspeakable.

She too had the Vision of a Heavenly Bridegroom, and to that Vision she was not disobedient. Very soon afterwards she was able to speak to Père Eustache and to surprise him by her vehemence. He spoke to her of earthly bridegrooms, but she replied that she must have a greater Lord than any earthly prince. Anne shared to the full the courage and the pride of her race. Her mother was surprised, and her father by no means wished all his children to quit him for the cloister. Poor M. Arnauld, he had made two of his daughters into Abbesses; he was punished by all the remaining ones becoming nuns.

Anne spent a year in the world after the memorable interview with Père Eustache. The Arnauld family, though not exactly noble, was highly respected, and several members held offices about the Court. Robert d'Andilly indeed spent most of his life there, and although the Court in 1616 was

by no means the brilliant and attractive place that it became later on, yet there was some gaiety. Anne, for instance, was privileged to see a Court ballet. Louis XIII. had just married his beautiful bride, Anne of Austria; the favourites of the Queen Regent, the Concini, soon to fall miserably, were in power; the Prince of Condé was passing weary hours in the Bastille. In a very short time all this was to change. On the 30th November, 1616, Richelieu embarked for the first time on his career of political life, and very soon the miserable vacillations of a weak government were changed into that unshrinking and unwavering policy which will never be forgotten.

Louis XIII. was about to enter abruptly on the scene and assert himself by the destruction of the favourites of his mother, and the exile of that mother.

But our Port Royalists do not as yet touch the history of France, or attract the notice of those in high places. Anne entered Port Royal on the 17th of October, 1616, and was fully professed in 1618.

Anne brought with her the atmosphere of ecstatic joy, of high aspirations, of mystic devotion. Agnès shared all these; Mère Angélique was rather distrustful of "visions." Anne found a great happiness in the daily tasks assigned to her. "Above all things, I liked sweeping," she said, "remembering how St Theresa liked that occupation."

Anne's novitiate was not without its trials. The loneliness of the place, the swamps, the aguish attacks which seem to have never been absent from the Abbey, all depressed her. The first beginnings of entire submission and self-denial oppressed her.

She has told us herself how at first the sense of loneliness overcame her and how Agnès comforted her, and the emptiness of her soul was filled. She felt as one, far removed from her by country, by circumstances, but like to her in the thirst for God, had felt—"a vacuum in the soul which nothing can fill save faith in God." For Anne had to struggle with

doubt, of what kind we know not, but from time to time in the long years she spent in Port Royal she had these spiritual trials and temptations which come to elect souls, and which for the most part must be faced and fought alone with God, however much aid may be given by spiritual guides and by spiritual companions. Anne was greatly helped in later years by one of whom there will be much to say, M. de St Cyran.

Anne felt at times, however, much spiritual joy. "Sometimes when I was alone I danced for joy at the thought that I was a religious, and sometimes when I saw a nun looking sad, I thought she need only look at her black veil and then she would cease to be sad." And she goes on to say that she continued to feel happy even during attacks of ague and fever.

It was on the day in 1618 when Anne was professed that the order came to Mère Angélique to set out and try to reform the notorious Abbey of Maubuisson. She was to depart with the Superior, the Abbot of Cîteaux, who had come to profess Anne.

The Port Royal sisters were plunged into frantic grief, but Anne could only smile and say, "Dieu me fit trop de grâces hier pour pleurer aujourdhui."

With the call of Mère Angélique to reform Maubuisson closes the first period of our history. Angélique is still young in 1618, but she returned to Port Royal a middle-aged woman with much experience of sorrow and of the sin of the world.

Everything up to this time in Port Royal had been done simply and solely for the one end—God's glory. Agnès had already joined her sister at Port Royal; not quite willingly at first, she left her own Abbey of St Cyr, and put herself under her sister's Rule.

She had plunged very early into the life of extreme austerity, and came to Port Royal in a critical condition of health. We are told in one of the *Mémoires* how tenderly Mère Angélique nursed her sister in a hot room, during the greatest heat of summer; every cranny was closed, as a breath of air made the invalid faint.

Mère Angélique was not in advance of her time in respect to a love of fresh air!

Agnès, however, recovered, and made her novitiate under no gentler condition than anyone else. She was already a striking person, and was, while still a novice, made Mistress of the Novices. Of her a monk prophesied that she would become one of the most distinguished nuns in France. As M. Sainte Beuve says: "She belongs to the school of St Theresa." Angélique treated Agnès with considerable rigour; she said herself that Agnès at the beginning of her Religious Life was extremely proud, self-satisfied, but "Dieu la changea."

Marie Claire, who was present at the famous "Journée du Guichet," was always a self-willed little person, as we shall see later on. She had been placed in Port Royal when a child of seven, and a little visit to her father's country home at Andilly raised feelings and wishes *not* in accordance with her vocation.

But, as events showed, Marie Claire was a born religious. Mère Angélique (who, whatever she may have been in these comparatively early days, was afterwards an excellent judge of vocations) "clothed," to use a technical term, her little sister when Marie was fourteen.

The reform was complete, and a spirit of fervour, of self-sacrifice, of obedience and of love to God and man reigned in the Convent. Wonderful stories are told of Mère Angélique's charity, both now and after her eight years' sojourn at Maubuisson. Mère Angélique had a passionate desire for real poverty, for mean buildings, for coarse clothing, for all and every kind of mortification. If a Sister became ill, it was always Mère Angélique who nursed her; if something rather less tempting in the way of food than the ordinary diet came in her way, the Mother always reserved it for herself. Silence was very strictly observed in Port Royal, and when one thinks of the smallness of talk, the excitement about petty details which is said to be among the besetting sins of Religious Communities, one feels that there is something to be said for Mère

Angélique's insistence on extreme restriction in the matter of speech. M. Maeterlinck himself can hardly have a higher opinion of the preciousness of silence than had Mère Angélique.

"But the silence she advised was not dull and purely outward, but flowed from the silence of the heart, which consists in the grace of recollection and a continual looking up to God."[1]

Even when the Community met in Chapter, there was little conversation; the time was spent chiefly in reading Holy Scripture and in spiritual instructions.

Mère Angélique tried much to plant and nourish humility, that it might be evident even in a Sister's movements and manners, and above all in the way she bore any and all slights and hurts and insults with patience, with thankfulness. Certainly she herself practised what she preached.

Mère Angélique used to maintain that everything worked for good in the souls of those who love God, even their faults—for these very faults indeed serve the purpose of making ardent souls more humble and watchful and dependent on God. She judged her younger Sisters not so much by the fact that "they had few or many faults, but rather by the way in which they began again after a fall, how they received reproof, if they were careful to make up as it were for any fault, if they strove against faults."

Mère Angélique's whole life was one of service for others, and there is something very strong in her remarks on the duty of considering others. If some one from outside wished to make a Retreat, she said the distraction, the extra work caused by such a person or persons must be disregarded. Charity must be preferred to regularity. If workmen were engaged in building or repairing, the Mother contrived that some priest should be at hand to teach, and that no earnings should be lost for time spent in devotion. Instances are given of tenderness to those who had fallen into sin, of rescue from a life of sin. Perhaps the Mother's

[1] *Histoire de l'Abbaye de Port Royal*, livre i., p. 44.

readiness to receive undowered Sisters into her Community, if she were sure of the genuineness of their vocation, was not the least striking proof of her boundless love, of her absolute unworldliness in an age certainly not remarkable for its contempt for worldly rank and riches.

A touching testimony to this is given by the Sister Marguerite Angélique. "Although I was lacking in the things of this world, and in intelligence, and still more in goodness, the Mother's joy seemed only to be increased, because she received me simply for the love of God. She devoted herself to me with an extraordinary kindness, taking the trouble to come nearly every day to the novitiate to teach me to read Latin. . . . I was very dainty about food; the mother encouraged me in mortification. She wished to receive me as being really poor, and when she learned that my mother had sent me some rather nice linen, she insisted on my sending it to my sister. . . . She helped my brother more than once in his expenses when he entered the army."

A very pretty story is told of two maidens who offered themselves for the novitiate: one had a dowry, the other had none. They were both received, but only one, the one with a dowry, was professed; the other poor novice was dismissed, but the dowry which the first had brought was bestowed on her. Many another such story is told of Mère Angélique. She was a true child of St Francis of Assisi, and we can imagine with what pleasure she would read of his devotion to his Bride Poverty.

Mère Angélique was free from anything like narrow-mindedness, from limited views. Her love extended far beyond her own Community: it was only necessary to be poor, or sick, a widow, an orphan, a repentant sinner, to find a sure way to Mère Angélique's heart.

And now we have reached the Maubuisson period—the first break in the comparatively peaceful time which succeeded the stormy "Journée du Guichet," the time which, as Sainte Beuve justly says, is char-

acterised by simple activity in doing good. Other Abbeys were reformed, other Abbesses felt the attraction, and came and put themselves to school under the now renowned young Abbess, who had not yet attained her thirtieth year. Later on we shall see nuns setting out from Port Royal to other Convents, ordered to undertake the task of reform. The whole Religious Life was reviving in clergy and laity, and Port Royal led the way in the renewal of fervour, and obedience, and devotion amongst those dedicated to serve God in Religion. The nuns at Port Royal lived with little regard for comfort, or ease, or convenience. They shared, of course, the ignorance of all sanitary laws, and the fact that the rooms set apart for the sick were damp, and space throughout limited, troubled them but little. M. Arnauld came to the rescue. At first, Mère Angélique had, as we have seen, considered it right to dispense with the help her father had given her before the reform. But when Anne entered Port Royal, he ordered repairs and fresh building to be carried out at his expense. And from that time the most tender affection united the whole family of Arnauld, little as they foresaw how inextricably their fortunes were interwoven with those of the Abbey, which the father of "tous les nôtres" had appropriated so carelessly and lightly to himself and his family.

CHAPTER II

MAUBUISSON (1618-1623)

The Abbey of Maubuisson had for some time enjoyed an evil reputation. Indeed, it is difficult to understand why M. Arnauld selected it as a suitable place of education for Angélique. It is possible, however, that so long as Henri IV. lived and protected it, the worst scandals were concealed. Louis XIII. had become aware of the state of affairs, and had given orders that Maubuisson should be "visited" and reformed. Mme. D'Estrées, the sister of Gabrielle, was one of the worst of "religious," one of those who, by their absolutely shameless conduct, amply justified any reproach hurled by their enemies at religious foundations.

Even Mme. D'Estrées seems to have had some qualms from time to time. She went so far as to pay a visit to Port Royal in 1611, and Angélique thought her former Superior in earnest, and offered to go to Maubuisson and help her. Nothing came of this.

The Abbot of Cîteaux, M. Boucherat, found the task of reform committed to him by the King by no means easy. He began by sending "religious" from his Abbey, armed with his authority, to take possession of it, but Mme. D'Estrées made their visit extremely unpleasant, and the last of them was, with the people in attendance on him, confined in a tower, fed on bread and water, and soundly flogged every morning. At the end of four days, M. Deruptis managed to escape through a window. It all seems like a story of the Middle Ages; Mme. D'Estrées, who was probably as

ignorant as she was wicked and depraved, could not read the signs of the times.

Mme. D'Estrées was by no means a coward, and stoutly resisted any attempt to eject her, and as she belonged to a good family she felt sure of protection.

But her own family were tired, and perhaps ashamed, of her. The Abbess had just forced her sister, a novice at Maubuisson, into a marriage. According to one of the *Mémoires* this marriage was the cause of her family's disgust, although M. Sainte Beuve states that her brother had helped the unworthy Abbess. What a picture of the time!

M. de Cîteaux went himself to Maubuisson, called a Chapter, saw each nun in private, but in vain tried to see the Abbess, who refused either to appear in Chapter or to see the Superior in private. Accordingly, M. de Cîteaux obtained an order from the Court, authorising him to convey the Abbess to the "Filles Pénitentes." He took a small army with him, and had no little difficulty in catching his Abbess, who retreated to bed, and then finding the doors had been forced, hid herself, half-dressed as she was, and obstinately refused to come out and dress. At last she was seized and conveyed to Paris on her bed.

After this edifying scene, M. de Cîteaux called the Chapter and ordered them to elect an Abbess, who was to govern the Abbey as Viceregent. He suggested Madame de Port Royal, who was already known to them. They had requested him to take one of themselves, and he did so, for had not Angélique been professed at Maubuisson? This frightened the nuns terribly: "We shall be reformed," they said in strong language, we shall fall "aux mains du monstre chimérique d'une réforme affreuse et sauvage."

But M. de Cîteaux had no pity. After consulting M. Arnauld—who by this time was sharing to some extent in the fame of the reformed Abbey—he repaired to Port Royal, as we have seen, and carried off the much-loved Mother, after professing the young and ardent Anne. Agnès, left behind as Prioress, to

govern, instead of the sister who had been her Mother in Religion, as her sister drove away, went back into the Chapel, and flinging herself before the altar, sobbed out in broken accents, "Ecce nos relinquimus omnia, omnia, omnia." It is the cry of many who are called to the Way of Sorrow, but no question of "what shall we have?" followed.

And the brave Angélique, with the simple obedience of a soldier called to the front, had risen to the occasion, and had left her peaceful, happy Convent to go to face every sort of disagreeable, deprivation of spiritual help, probable danger. She had no illusions on the subject; she warned her companions that they might lose health and life itself in the weary battle.

They seem to have left Port Royal in much the same spirit in which we see our heroic brothers and sisters set forth for Central Africa or China, thank God, in this unromantic and so-called faithless age.

These anticipations were justified. Neither Isabel Agnès de Château-neuf nor Marie Claire was ever well again. They seem to have suffered (to complete the likeness to modern days) from perpetual attacks of malarial fever. Isabel Agnès de Château-neuf died in 1621, at the early age of twenty-eight, having completely lost her health; and Marie Claire, who survived her sixteen years, told her niece, the famous Angélique de St Jean (daughter of M. d'Andilly), that from the time she had entered Maubuisson she had never known a day's freedom from feverish attacks.

The third of the Port Royalists who accompanied Mère Angélique was the "Mère de la Croix," one of the older nuns whom Angélique had "reformed." They spent a few days in Paris with the Arnauld family, while M. de Cîteaux prepared the nuns at Maubuisson, and then set out.

When the little party arrived at Maubuisson, one of the Offices of the Day was being sung, and as one of the "relations" says, the way in which the duty was discharged was an excellent specimen for the Mother of what she might expect. The discordant noise was

such that it seemed to be the sound of people who were quarrelling, rather than that of pious voices chanting holy words.

M. de Cîteaux entered, presented Angélique, read some regulations, for which she had asked, to aid her in her work of reform, then convoked a Chapter, and installed her with plenary authority to govern. Angélique's work now began. She showed every quality which was to be desired in a person armed with authority, inspired with a keen sense of what was fitting and right, and yet filled with the love which "beareth all things, endureth all things," patient with the sinful, strict and unsparing with herself; and holding up to those who were with her the loftiest ideal of courage, of love, of self-surrender. From those who knew the love of Christ, who were in very deed His, she expected everything; from those who had to be converted to a sense of sin, she expected nothing. Certainly this is the teaching of the school of Christ.

Angélique began her hard task by trying all the forces of love. She knew many of the nuns, she showed affection for them, she tried her best to please them; and a touching story is told how "la Mère" devoted herself with unfailing charity and pity to the care of a poor blind old nun, and did all she could to amuse and comfort her.

By degrees the extreme terror which the arrival of the Port Royalists had excited, diminished, and the sweetness and religious fervour of the little band won the hearts of the Maubuisson nuns. The Port Royalists, who were all still young, were in their purity, their self-surrender, like beings from another sphere.

There were at this time some twenty-two nuns at Maubuisson, most of whom had been professed without any inclination for the Religious Life, and who were as fully unfitted for it as complete ignorance of the first elements of Christian knowledge and the total absence of the most ordinary moral standard in their Abbess could make them. They could not, it is said,

even make their confessions, or recite the Office properly. They spent their time in amusing themselves as best they could, and it was a favourite expedition in the summer to go out of the precincts of Maubuisson, and meet the young monks from the neighbouring Abbey of Pontoise; these remarkable specimens of conventual life frequently danced together on the grass. Poor people—so badly treated by a world which had forced them into a life for which they were as unfitted as they would probably have been for the holy estate of marriage. One cannot easily believe that the nun who quite spoiled her life would have made an exemplary wife and mother. There is something grimly fantastic in the quiet account in the *Histoire de Port Royal*, from which all this is quoted.

How far removed this sort of standard was from the lofty, exalted ideals of Port Royal! Mère Angélique must have felt that the place was a veritable Augean stable.

First of all, she got rid of the care of administering the estate of Maubuisson by engaging an agent, or steward, who was, however, to act under her orders. Then came internal reforms. Bit by bit, little by little, the Convent was restored to outward order and respectability, and the strictly cloistered life was revived.

But Angélique saw with her usual clear-sightedness that nothing could be done with the elderly nuns, that new wine was needed to burst the ancient wine-skin full of prejudice, of evil habits, of sloth. She obtained permission from the Superior (M. de Cîteaux), and possibly also from the Court, to receive forty novices, without any restriction as to dowry, with a single condition—vocation. Maubuisson was supposed to have on the foundation a hundred nuns; at this time there were only sixteen Professed Sisters.

Very soon numbers of would-be postulants presented themselves; not a few were brought by parents who saw an easy way of disposing of superfluous daughters, since this wonderful and eccentric Abbess exacted no dowry. "God gave me from the beginning an intense

aversion to haggling about maidens." Angélique once said that the Capuchin Father to whom she owed those first stirrings, told her that it was simony to exact a dowry from a postulant. But she exacted something as difficult to procure on demand, nay, more difficult, than money—she asked for the marks of a true and inward call.

The young novices at Maubuisson were watched and taught and tended with the care one would expect. The Sister Isabelle Agnès, a girl of nineteen, was made Mistress of the Novices, who were kept entirely apart from the original Sisters. Mère Angélique with the other Port Royalists shared their refectory, and practically lived with them. Mère Angélique had set her heart on her novices learning Plain Song thoroughly, so that in time the reproach of the disgracefully rendered Offices might be rolled away from the Convent. Many years were spent in this; but work of all sorts, religious training in silence and recollection, went forward also. Mère Angélique shirked no hardship herself; no bit of housework was too laborious, too menial for her. As we should expect, she chose the worst and unhealthiest room for her own. Mère Angélique set every law of health at defiance, but the seventeenth century was not remarkable for love of fresh air or of frequent ablutions. Little by little the rule of absolute silence was established; work was done with little or no noise. The novices' expenses were cut down to the last degree of economy, and their food was barely sufficient. But the older nuns were treated with the same unwearying kindness. Angélique realised that conversion must precede the life of self-denial, that the outward rule can only be sanctified by the inner life—"Christ dwelling in us and we in Him."

The whole period of her sojourn at Maubuisson was for Angélique one of intense fervour. She denied herself every comfort, chose the least comfortable cell, undertook every sort of menial work, waited on the sick, and also attended to the poor outside Maubuisson.

And now a new epoch—so to speak—began in 1619.

Angélique was to meet a spiritual adviser who could help, advise, "comfort" as no preceding confessor or director had been able to do. This was the great St François de Sâles. And a short digression is necessary in order that we may fully understand what manner of man St François was. It is needless here to give the details of his life. Of noble birth, born in 1567 in Savoy, called in 1602 to be Bishop of Geneva, François de Sâles lived, more or less perpetually, in the great world. Known equally at the Court of Savoy and that of Paris, through all these years he was in the world, never of it. Those who would study his life and his works can do so. What we wish to notice is the peculiar character of St François' teaching.

Those who have read Sainte Beuve's History of Port Royal will remember his summing up of St François' character: "Son âme, c'était une sphère complète sous une seule étoile." That is to say, his character was extraordinarily balanced. With the most profound sense of the love of God, so great indeed, that love is the virtue, the gift we most associate with his name, yet he had the compensating grace of a strong sense of justice, of the blackness of sin, of the need of self-discipline. He was, as we have seen, the director *par excellence* of women, and yet all his relations with them were marked by that sanctified common sense which is so lamentably absent in many good people.

There was in St François de Sâles a remarkable union of that love for God, of the temper which characterises—shall we say St John?—of contemplation, of charity for others, with a clear-sighted judgment of men and of affairs.

His life was one of incessant work, of "affairs," of delicate missions. From these, he returned to his conferences with his spiritual children, especially to his beloved Mme. de Chantal, the first Superior of the Order of the Visitation, or to his writings, or his letters. "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength," he seems to be ever saying. Yet he was not in the

least blind to the difficulties, the shortcomings, the sins of the Church of his day.

Angélique said, years later :—

"This holy prelate helped me very much, and I may say that he confided in me almost as much as in Mme. de Chantal. I was surprised at the freedom and kindness with which he uttered his intimate thoughts to me, as I had previously confided mine to him. It is certain that far less enlightenment as to the direction and rule of the Church has been attributed to him than he really possessed. He had that single eye which perceived every evil and every corruption which lack of discipline has brought about in the way of life both of secular clergy and of religious.

"But he hid all this in silence, and enveloped it in charity and humility. He groaned over the corruptions of the Court of Rome, pointing these out to me in detail. Then he said : 'My daughter, this is a real cause for weeping, for if it is spoken of to the world, useless scandal will be caused. For these sick souls love their ills and will not be cured. It is the duty of Œcumenical Councils to reform the head and the members ; *they are above the Pope.* But Popes get exasperated when the Church does not bend under them, although in truth the Church is above the Pope when the Council is universal and canonical.

"'I know this, but prudence forbids my speaking of this, for I can hope for no results if I did speak. We must weep and pray in secret that God will put His Hand to what man cannot, and we should humble ourselves to the ecclesiastical powers under whom He has placed us, and beseech Him that He would convert and humiliate them by the might of His Spirit, and that He would reform the abuses which have crept into the Church, and would send to her holy pastors . . .'

"He comforted me very much, as he comforted Mme. de Chantal ; he had united us in a firm friendship as intimate as it could be without our having seen each other."

Mère Angélique said once in 1653 to her nephew, M. Le Maître, that until St François came into her life she had never been able to feel complete confidence in any spiritual guide. "I found in him such great

sincerity, and such great gifts and graces and inward light, that I opened my heart to him. (Je lui mis mon cœur entre les mains sans aucune reserve.) She mentions many previous advisers who had helped her to some extent, but she says that some of these "were too subtle for me. I loved sincerity and openness above all in people who advised one in spiritual things (gens de conscience) . . . Others were more frank, but they seemed to me so limited in their knowledge, that I was obliged to be very prudent and reserved with them."

The seventeenth century was, as every other century has been, and as all periods will be to the end of time, full of perplexity and causes for sorrow. St François, again, to quote Sainte Beuve, practised the "silence de gémissement."[1]

On Port Royal and Mère Angélique, St François' influence was altogether happy, and not the least of the benefits he procured to her was the friendship of his very special spiritual daughter, Madame de Chantal.

When Angélique heard that the Bishop was in Paris, she longed very much to see him, and it fortunately chanced that a certain M. de Bonneuil, who held a post at Court[2] wished his daughter, who was being brought up at Maubuisson, to be confirmed by M. de Genève, as he was usually styled. The holy Bishop came to the "reformed' Abbey, and between the still youthful Abbess, longing so earnestly for spiritual counsel, for guidance in her difficult position, and the director *par excellence* of holy souls, there grew up a friendship which lasted until St François' death in 1622.

Mère Angélique seized the opportunity, as soon as it presented itself, of consulting M. de Genève. She went into Retreat for a few days, in which she was able to consult him on many points. She unburdened herself by making a general confession, and amongst other things she confided to St François her great desire to get rid of her Abbey of Port Royal, to be a simple nun

[1] *Mémoires Historiques et Chronologiques.*
[2] *Introducteur des Ambassadeurs.*

and to enter the Order of the Visitation which Mme. de Chantal had just established under St François' direction, and to this piece of self-abnegation the Bishop seemed at first favourable. She had had leanings to several other Orders, and it was the absence of anything that savoured of extravagance in St François that attracted her. The Carmelites revolted her by the number of their visions and special revelations, which *might* be possible for St Theresa, but did not seem probable for them.

Angélique herself wrote to her father suggesting that as her work at Maubuisson would take a long time, it might be as well to replace her at Port Royal by Agnès. But M. Arnauld, who combined the wisdom of the serpent with his other qualities, simply set himself to work to make Agnès coadjutor-Abbess, and obtained this favour without much trouble.

And M. de Genève came to the conclusion that Mère Angélique had better be left in her own Community and her office. God, he said, had marked her out for great things—to do, to suffer. "I think I may assure you of this, as being God's will, that you will be used by Him for important things, and in an extraordinary way, and also that you have reason to adore with deep humility the ordering of His wonderful Providence."[1] Thirty years afterwards, Angélique spoke of this prophecy, and felt that it had been indeed fulfilled.

St François paid several visits to Maubuisson, and the last one (August, 1619) lasted nine days. He had always spent a short time at Andilly, and had made himself the friend of the Arnauld family; he had solemnly blessed the children, among them a boy of six years old, one day to become the famous Antoine Arnauld. And with the young Arnaulds there were also the children of poor Catherine Le Maître, M. Arnauld's only married daughter, who, after a short unhappy married life had separated from her husband and was living at home; and Robert d'Andilly, who,

[1] *Histoire Générale de Port Royal*, vol. i., p. 97.

some years before had married the daughter of M. de la Boderie, who had been Ambassador in England. D'Andilly speaks in the warmest terms of his father and mother-in-law, and says of his marriage—perhaps with a little touch of Arnauld pride but also with warm religious feeling—"It is not strange that many marriages are unhappy, because the only considerations in people's minds are fortune, position, and so on, and no thought is given to the stock, or to merit, or to right living; and far from considering that happiness should be sought in a union so holy that it does represent the union between Christ and His Church, the only idea is 'possessions.'"

There is a refreshingly noble tone and lofty ideal of life among this patriarchal family, and one cannot help thinking that St François must have enjoyed his visit to Andilly.

Catherine made a vow of perpetual widowhood, and St François received it. Afterwards in his letters he alludes to her as his dear St Catherine of Genoa. Her eldest son, a boy of eleven, so well known as M. Le Maître, made his confession to him, and received much advice as he told his mother afterwards, adding that St François seemed much cleverer than his ordinary confessor.

Mère Angélique says that she did not find St François that mild director which so many considered him to be, and it seems that his relations with his celebrated spiritual child, Madame de Chantal, foundress of the Order of the Visitation, were by no means of an enervating nature. It is possible that each who went for guidance to the great Bishop found what he or she most needed. Ardent, noble, courageous souls such as Angélique found in him the equally courageous, affectionate, and yet stern adviser.

After all, may we not reverently say that it is the method of Jesus Christ? To the shrinking woman, the abashed publican, who so tender? but to His very own, His nearest, what does He offer? To be baptised with His Baptism, to drink of His Cup, to be girded by

another and carried where another wills, to be crucified with Christ, to bear the marks of the Lord Jesus. What is the last Beatitude?—Persecution, reviling ; and those chosen souls in time respond to the call.

And therefore His true followers who are called to exercise in any way the Pastoral Office have to learn His method. Angélique says of St François: "He condoned nothing in those souls who wished to be led to the truth, and those who really study his Rules for his Religious will perceive that he desired his spiritual children to be dead to themselves and crucified with Jesus Christ fully as much as did any other great teacher."

As often happens, the time of quiet retreat, of holy peace was sent to the brave young Abbess (she was only twenty-seven) to prepare her for a real conflict with—in this case—flesh and blood.

Madame D'Estrées had by no means resigned herself to her fate, or in any way repented. Aided by the Count de Sanzé, to whom she had married her young sister, and some other gentlemen who probably enjoyed the adventure, she contrived to escape. She had already engaged in a lawsuit to regain her Abbey, and appeared likely to win her case, but this escapade ruined her.

At six o'clock in the morning, escorted by this troop, so suitable an escort for a "soi-disant religieuse," she arrived at Maubuisson, and one of the original members of the Community (a "fille perdue" as the *Mémoires* call her), who seems to have kept up a correspondence with her former Abbess, opened the door.

The first person to be seen was Mère Angélique, who received her with perfect calmness and "receuillement" (recollection).

"Madame," said the former Abbess, "you've been in my place for a long time; you must leave my house, now that I have returned to it."

"Madame," replied Angélique, "when those who sent me here order me to leave, I will willingly go."

Madame D'Estrées was extremely angry at finding her former rooms converted into an infirmary, and occupied by two sick nuns. Mère Angélique replied simply that they had not expected the honour of a visit, and retired, ordering everything to go on quietly, and even remembering to order a dinner for the unwelcome intruder. Then came the hour of Terce and of High Mass, at which Angélique quietly took her place as Abbess, and she and several of her nuns made their Communion.

The strange day wore on. It seems as if Madame D'Estrées hardly knew what to do; she wandered about the house, trying to win over some of the old nuns to her side, and to get possession of the keys.

Dinner-time came, and Mère Angélique after sending up Madame D'Estrées' meal to her own room, which had been put in order for her, sat down with her little troop in the refectory. When they were all seated, she told them that it was quite impossible to guess what might happen during the day, and they must all eat and keep up their strength.

After dinner, the confessor of the Abbey, a certain Père Sabatier, had a short conversation with the intrepid young Abbess, and advised her to withdraw quietly, reminding her of the various devices by means of which Madame D'Estrées had already alarmed his feeble spirit. Mère Angélique, with the courage of a captain of a gallant ship at sea when he is asked to abandon his ship, replied that she could not possibly go out, unless she were commanded by her Superiors or compelled by violence.

Madame D'Estrèes then made her appearance, and the same arguments were renewed; Madame D'Estrées proposed that they should go into church, which they did, accompanied by the little band of Mère Angélique's own children. Greatly to their surprise they found the church full of armed men. The nuns collected round their Abbess, and Madame D'Estreés, working herself into a passion, made as if she were going to snatch Angélique's veil from her head.

Then, as Mère Angélique in her vivid recital says: "Behold my lambs became as lions, and one of them, a girl of gentle birth, exclaimed: 'You wretched woman, do you dare to take away Madame de Port Royal's veil. I know you, I know what you are.'"

And with these words, the high-spirited little nun snatched Madame D'Estrées' veil and flung it away. In the meantime, the gentle Anne Eugénie Arnauld, who some time before had joined her sister at Maubuisson, was kneeling in one of the stalls absorbed in prayer, "priant toujours Dieu dans tout ce bruit."[1]

Madame D'Estrées lost all control of herself, and turning to her brother and the other gentlemen, ordered them to expel Mère Angélique and her nuns by force. One of them actually took hold of Angélique's arms, and Angélique after some resistance, seeing that it was useless, signed to her novices to yield.

In the court of the Convent there was a carriage, but when Angélique got in with her four Port Royalists, the novices and some of the Maubuisson nuns clung on to the wheels and the doors, so that it was impossible for the coachman to move, and one of the Port Royalists said, "Dear mother, where are you going?" whereupon Angélique got out and proceeded to marshal her nuns and novices and leave the Abbey. Madame D'Estrées by no means wished the little troop to follow Angélique, and there ensued something of a scuffle, during which a strong novice pushed the door open, took Madame D'Estrées round the waist, and held her tightly until the file of "religieuses" had passed through.

Two of Mère Angélique's spiritual daughters were not among them. One who had just been professed was kept back by a feeling that, as she was a cloistered nun, she ought not to go out. The other, a postulant, had been happily occupied in the dairy for some hours and had heard nothing of the disturbances. When she came into the Abbey, great was her surprise and terror. She was a strong-minded young person, and insisted on

[1] Anne had been very ill, and had been brought to Maubuisson, as it was considered healthier than Port Royal.

being allowed to go out. It is to be hoped that she soon caught up the expelled nuns.

Mère Angélique led her little flock in procession to the town of Pontoise, only a very short walk, but Mère Angélique and her nuns were by no means in the habit of indulging in walks. A halt was made at the outlying suburb of Aumône, where in the Church of St Ouen, Queen Blanche's image of the Virgin still stands (Queen Blanche, the mother of St Louis).

There was much contagious sickness in Pontoise, and Mère Angélique made her little troop take cordials, and tear up the apron of a postulant in order to provide veils for those poor nuns who had come unveiled in their hasty flight. So they entered the town "en silence et avec une grande modestie," as the *Mémoires* say. Anne Eugénie in particular was telling her beads as quietly and collectedly as if she were at home at Port Royal. The good people of Pontoise were naturally a good deal surprised at the unusual sight of a procession of nuns, and debated as to what it all meant. Mère Angélique made her homeless children enter the first church to which they came, and very soon the news of their arrival reached the ears of some of the clergy, who knew Mère Angélique and hastened to greet her. Other Convents sent offers of hospitality and shelter to this peripatetic Community; the Mother thought it best to accept the offer of one of the principal clergy of the town and take possession of his house, which he gave up to her. In the same quiet and "recollected" manner that they had entered, they left the church, first saying the Office of Vespers, and went to their new abode. Mère Angélique sent a special messenger to Paris, and awaited events with the assurance that she had all the Arnauld family with influence and credit at her back. The religious world of Pontoise sent beds, provisions, food, to the house, and she established the usual "seclusion" and the regular hours of prayer and of work, as if nothing unusual had happened. M. Arnauld *père* was in the country, but his second son, Henri—one day to be Bishop of Angers—procured, easily enough,

an order to arrest Madame D'Estrées and to restore Mère Angélique. And from the Court came an order to M. de Fontis, the "Chevalier du Guet,"[1] to proceed to Maubuisson with a company of archers. Without any loss of time, on the very day after the expulsion of the Port Royalists, the archers arrived at Maubuisson. Madame D'Estrées and her brother had been warned of their approach, and took flight, leaving behind some important papers and an especial confidential friend, who took refuge in a cupboard. The Chevalier then went to Pontoise, and politely intimated to Mère Angélique that it was the King's (Louis XIII.) wish that she should return to Maubuisson. It was ten o'clock at night, but Angélique prepared to obey, and found all the clerical world of Pontoise ready to escort her and her "lambs," together with a large number of people holding torches and thus lighting her way. Mère Angélique was known and loved in Pontoise. M. de Fontis posted sentinels all night, and the regular inmates of the Abbey were up, many of them preparing food for their guard. In the morning one of the archers discovered the hidden confidante, a certain Dame la Serre, a nun, who was obliged to show herself with her papers. The Chevalier quitted Maubuisson with most of his guard, leaving some, however, to watch the Abbey; the necessity of this guard and the insults and annoyances which were plentifully showered on the Abbey and the Abbess, are curious bits of social history. Evidently to some of the neighbouring gentry Madame D'Estrées and her house of misrule were more acceptable than Mère Angélique's strict and holy ideal. The whole conception of Religion and of its restraints had been miserably debased by the Wars of Religion, and had not yet recovered the disastrous effects on the Church of the world, in the world's worst form. For six months the guards remained; but the terrible Madame D'Estrées having been discovered and again confined, the necessity for the protection of the secular

[1] Inspector of Police. He was responsible for the security of the town of Paris.

arm seemed to be gone. Madame D'Estrées survived this escapade some fifteen or twenty years. Her Abbey allowed her a pension, but she wasted most of it in vain attempts to regain her position in a more legal manner than she had yet attempted. Her confederates at Maubuisson were sent to other Convents.

St François de Sâles wrote to his very dear daughter Mère Angélique congratulating her on her speedy return, and adding some words full of his own peculiar fondness for comparisons, taken from the world around him, in which he compares Angélique and her "lambs" to a hive of bees occupied continually in the work of making honey.

Soon after this exploit of Mme. D'Estrées, M. Arnauld died. It was a great grief and a great loss to Mère Angélique. Ever since the memorable Journée du Guichet there had been nothing but the tenderest relations between the father and daughter. M. Arnauld seems with increasing years to have become less of a "Chrétien selon le monde"—no doubt for him as for the rest of the family St François de Sâles had been a powerful influence for good.

To Port Royal he bequeathed a large sum of money, and on his deathbed he executed an instrument despoiling himself of all worldly possessions in the event of his recovery, and entrusting all he had to his wife and his eldest son.

In 1620, Bulls arrived from Rome confirming Agnès in her office of coadjutor-Abbess of Port Royal. Mère Angélique paid four visits to Port Royal during these years, and was present at the installation of Agnès as coadjutor-Abbess. Agnès by no means wished for this dignity, and was not at all happy on the day of her installation. She was greatly comforted by opening a Service Book at the Antiphon which said, "Isti sunt duæ olivæ et duo candelabra lucentia ante Dominum." She pointed out the "duæ olivæ" to Angélique, saying, "We shall be two, my sister," as indeed in time they were.

Angélique on her side wished very much to leave

Maubuisson; she resisted any attempt to make her the titular Abbess, and begged that some one who was sufficiently well-born to resist all Madame D'Estrées' pretensions should be sent to take her place. The Abbey was finally bestowed on Madame de Soissons, a natural daughter of the Count de Soissons, and therefore a lady of Royal blood.[1]

For some thirteen months longer Mère Angélique remained at Maubuisson, and according to the *Histoire de Port Royal*, she nursed the new Abbess through an attack of smallpox, which she caught herself.

But Madame de Soissons, although she appears to have begun with some amount of friendship for Angélique, cooled a good deal. Probably she wished to reign alone, and Angélique was only too glad to retire to Port Royal, taking with her some thirty of her spiritual children, whom she had received at Maubuisson with no dowry, and who in consequence were not welcome to the new *régime*.

The Port Royal Sisters, to whom she wrote requesting permission to bring the newcomers to share Port Royal poverty, received the offer as an earnest of a coming blessing, and Mme. Arnauld at her request sent carriages to convey the party to Port Royal.

Mme. Arnauld was not at first quite ready to help Angélique in this design, but the Abbess told the novices to throw themselves at Mme. Arnauld's feet and she would not be able to resist their entreaties. So it was; Mme. Arnauld could not resist the sight and sound of these poor pleading maidens, and departed to Paris quite won over. Angélique wrote in a few days asking for carriages—"this to be done for God, not out of consideration for me."

M. de St Cyran came in as Mme. Arnauld was

[1] The Count de Soisson was a grandson of Louis, Prince of Condé, of the House of Bourbon. Louis was a younger brother of Antoine, the father of Henri IV. The Bourbons, it will be remembered, were descended from Robert, the sixth son of St Louis (d. 1270), who married the heiress of Bourbon.

reading Angélique's letter, and assured her that her daughter was wholly right.

Mère Angélique sent her new troop on before her, as she wished to stay in Paris ; and fearful lest the arrival of the new family might distract the Port Royalists, she made each of them ticket herself with her name so that each might be recognised, and ordered them to observe silence until she herself came. Which (to our minds perhaps somewhat rigorous) order they implicitly obeyed. Perhaps Mère Angélique realised too well the peculiar sin of Convents—the eagerness to dwell on and be interested in very tiny events—not to try in every way to repress any excitement, any fear of gossip.

In her scheme of things conventual there was no—

> "At the meal we sit together,
> *Salve tibi!* I must hear
> Wise talk of the kind of weather,
> Sort of season, time of year ;
> Not a plenteous cork crop ; scarcely
> Dare we hope oak galls, I doubt ;
> What's the Latin name for 'parsley'?
> What's the Greek name for 'swine's snout'?" [1]

The original members of Port Royal gladly welcomed their new Sisters ; and it is remarked in one of the *Mémoires* that what St Paul says of the churches of Macedonia might be very well applied to them: "In a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality."

No murmur about the inconvenience of so great a crowd was heard, and the one thought was how to carry on the work of "perfection."

Angélique, Isabelle Agnès, Marie Claire, and Agnès made a kind of conspiracy of zeal. Frequently, the three last would think out a plan and would then submit it to their Mother, who would modify it or approve it as the case might be. About this time

[1] "Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister."

Angélique suppressed the Religious Conferences which had hitherto prevailed in recreation times. These were no part of the original Rule of St Benedict, but almost every new order of religious had thought them needful. "L'amour du silence et l'esprit de prière qui régnoient alors dans Port Royal, les rendoient inutiles à des personnes dont la conversation étoit en ciel."

For the first time Mère Angélique was brought, through her reception of the dowerless nuns, into contact with him who was to have so great an influence on the fortunes of Port Royal, Jean du Vergier de Hauranne, Abbé de St Cyran.

But the period of his real influence had not yet come, the influence which was to bring out the character of the Port Royal School of Religion. Severity, self-discipline, lofty ideals were not new to Mère Angélique, and we have seen already that she had not found any enervating softness in St François de Sâles. Yet St François seems to have found her rule somewhat stern, somewhat forbidding, for he once said to her: "Ma fille, ne vaudroit il pas mieux ne pas prendre de si gros poissons, et en prendre davantage." To which she replied, that if she had had to make a rule, possibly she would have made a gentler one; but having inherited a strict rule, she thought it her business to keep to it.

Angélique kept up a correspondence with the Mère de Chantal, founder of the Order of the Visitation, whose advice she continually asked, and who had a great esteem for the Mère de Port Royal. They met several times, and continued friends, until Madame de Chantal's death in 1641.

M. de St Cyran, as he is always designated, had already formed his life-long friendship with Angélique's elder brother, M. d'Andilly, and with her mother, and on hearing of her return to Port Royal with the little troop of "Poor Sisters," he wrote to her, approving most strongly of what she had done. From time to time he came to Port Royal and addressed the Community, and of Mère Angélique he said, "He had seen many

Abbesses reform their houses, but he had seen very few who had reformed their own characters." But, not for many years did he in any way exercise direct influence as a director on Mère Angélique and the other nuns. He made a great impression, however, by a sermon preached on the Eve of the Ascension, 1623, pointing out the relation between the Ascension of Our Lord and the Holy Eucharist.

He also wrote to the Mother a long and beautiful letter, begging her to maintain the spirit of self-sacrifice which had filled her.

Another member of the Arnauld family now joined the Port Royal Community—Madeleine, born 1607. She, like most of the others, had not in the first days of early youth felt any leanings to the Religious Life, but, according to *l'Histoire de Port Royal* by Dom Clemencet, she had suddenly become possessed with a fervent desire for it, owing to a dream in which she had seen her patron saint, St Mary Magdalene, appearing to her in a thorny desert and holding out a "Religious habit." Mère Angélique, who had always a great deal of robust common sense, took no great notice of this dream, and tested her young sister by two years of waiting. But as she was clothed at the age of fifteen and professed a year later, one cannot think Madeleine's patience was much put to the proof. Youth ended earlier in the seventeenth century than it does now, and as brides of fifteen and sixteen were not unusual spectacles in the world, it probably seemed quite natural that girls of that age should be seen in the Religious Life.

Fresh undertakings now crowded on Mère Angélique. A certain Abbey of Lys, near the town of Melun, between Paris and Fontainebleau, had fallen into evil ways: the Abbess of the Community had to some extent, at any rate, been to blame. To her had been given, as was the prevailing fashion, a coadjutor in the person of Madame de la Tremoille, who found it impossible to carry on the work of reform. She sent two well-known priests to ask Mère Angélique for help, and

Anne Eugénie Arnauld ("de l'Incarnation" in Religion) was sent to be Prioress, an office corresponding, one supposes, to the office of Assistant Superior; and another Port Royalist, Soeur Marie des Anges, was to be Mistress of the Novices. Marie des Anges was a very remarkable person, and we shall have something more to say about her later.

She was the daughter of an *avocat* (as we in England would say, a barrister) in Chartres, named Suireau, who was of good family, but who had not made much money, and had become endowed with many children. Marie Suireau longed to enter Port Royal, and it so happened that three sisters, friends of hers, were all starting at the same time for Port Royal with a view of becoming postulants. M. Suireau, who knew his daughter's wishes, was advised to send Marie with them. They arrived on the 15th of April, 1615. The moment Mère Agnès saw the new arrivals, she said to a Sister, "Only that little one will stay"; and so it turned out. Marie's father died during her novitiate; her eldest sister then embraced the Religious Life, and was known in Religion as Soeur Marguerite de l'Ascension. Some years afterwards the mother, having accidentally discovered that widows could be received, became a lay sister, and died a few days after her Profession. Marie des Anges, as she was known in Religion, came to Lys with Anne in July, 1623. True daughters of their spiritual Mother, they bore the difficulties, discomforts, trials of their new burden in the same spirit as the little cohort from Port Royal had borne their trials at Maubuisson. Marie des Anges modelled herself entirely on Mère Angélique, and as might be expected, showed the same defiance of the laws of health as did all in Port Royal.

But after all they were not particularly behind their generation; the details of self-denial and of mortification vary, and the Life of Religion will increase, please God, in true enlightenment and wisdom, but the principle of that life will never die, so long as our Lord's words: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and

give to the poor," and: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me," have power to sway men's minds. As Mère Angélique had worked at Maubuisson, so did they; it was a life of *being* rather than of *doing*, and it was on the novices that they chiefly rested their hopes.

Mère Angélique came to Lys in 1625 with three more Port Royalists. Finding the old unruly Abbess difficult to control, she called in the aid of one of her mother's brothers (we remember that Madame Arnauld was the daughter of a famous lawyer). By his help the Convent at Lys finally got rid of the offending Superior, and Mme. de Tremoille was regularly installed.

Angélique "educated" the new Abbess just as she had done others. She taught her to pray before every difficulty. "When it was necessary that Madame de la Tremoille should do something which, on account of the former Abbess, she much disliked, she (Angélique) begged her to kneel down and offer it (the duty) to God, and ask His help."

Angélique's courtesy to the former Abbess was unfailing. The Sister Agnès de Marle de la Falaire, from whose narrative this is taken, tells us that Angélique made her visit the poor dethroned Abbess daily, as the latter had taken a fancy to Soeur Agnès.

Yet, when the same Abbess presented herself at the Holy Communion without giving any tokens of repentance of her former bad life, Angélique persuaded the confessor to persist in his determination not to communicate her.

During this sojourn at Lys, Angélique fell ill, and, hearing of the grief of her nuns at Port Royal, told them not to grieve excessively, even if she died: "Il faut être généreux et regarder l'éternité."

Anne Eugénie and Marie des Anges returned to Port Royal in 1626.

Mère Angélique visited several other Abbeys, and received some members of other Communities at Port Royal during these years which followed her return from Maubuisson.

Angélique had also an experience of a refractory nun. A lay sister named Marguérite Agathe du Chesne fell into a miserable state of sullenness,—the poor thing suffered from continual toothache, and one cannot help feeling that her fits of naughtiness were due to physical causes. However that might be, the nun on one All Saints' night slipped out of the Abbey, and once out, was terribly frightened at the thought of wolves, so she went to a peasant's cottage, where with difficulty she got a night's lodging. The next day she went to Paris to a sister, who took her at once to a Convent of Bernardine Fathers, one of whom recognised the runaway: in the meantime her absence had been discovered at Port Royal. She had already told her confessor that she meant to go away, and as he had informed the Mother of her intention, a search was made. The runaway was sent back, and was received by the mother with, "My dear child." It is sad to have to relate that Angélique could not win Marguérite's heart. She had to be sent away to another Convent.

Many stories are told of Mère Angélique's wonderful kindness to the poor; and there is a singularly touching one of a girl who had been deceived under promise of marriage, and who came to Port Royal to see a Sister who was a relation of hers. The poor girl's story came to Mère Angélique's ears, and with large-hearted tenderness she took care of her, and of her child after it was born; and not only then, but saw to it that the child was properly brought up and taught a trade, contriving also that no word should reach the girl's own acquaintances. The whole story shows Mère Angélique under a wonderfully pleasing aspect, so much more tender and ready to make allowances than might have been expected.

CHAPTER III

MÈRE ANGÉLIQUE RETURNS TO PORT ROYAL—PERIOD OF M. DE LANGRES (1623-1636)—PORT ROYAL DE PARIS

Institut du Saint Sacrement

We are now entering on what Sainte Beuve calls the period of M. Zamet—a period over which we who love Port Royal do not care to linger.

Mère Angélique had come to a determination which, in the light of later years, seems to us to have been the source of all the subsequent misfortunes which fell upon Port Royal. That was, to remove herself and most of her nuns to Paris.

A certain Jesuit Father, Père Binet, it is said, first advised her to move, and, as one of the historians observes, neither M. de St Cyran nor St François de Sâles would have approved this migration.

Several reasons were given for the change: the accommodation at Port Royal was far too limited; the place was unhealthy (but we should not think that considerations of health weighed greatly with Mère Angélique!); also, Mme. Arnauld wished very much to become a religious at Port Royal.

Mère Angélique says that one day, after the Profession of a nun, her mother, Mme. Arnauld, came to her and said she wished to make a Retreat. "I was intensely glad about it, being sure that this Retreat of a few days would lead to one of life-long duration. . . . She was so kind and so humble as to wish me to conduct her Retreat, and the next day, to my great surprise, she knelt down and begged forgiveness for having felt angry

because so many girls had been received without dowries." Two days after the Retreat, Mme. Arnauld confided to Angélique her belief that God had called her to the Religious Life; only poor Mme. Le Maître's sad condition, neither a widow nor a wife, made her hesitate. But Mme. Le Maître was overjoyed, and the desire to be near her made Mme. Arnauld more anxious to remove the Community.

Probably another reason, the determining cause, was Mère Angélique's own desire to withdraw herself and her Abbey from the jurisdiction of the monks of Cîteaux, and to place herself immediately under that of the Archbishop of Paris. It was a fatal mistake, but not an unnatural one. Mère Angélique had no very great opinion of the monks of her order whom she had encountered; she had really been more hindered than helped by them in her work, especially at Maubuisson. The then Superior at Cîteaux was anything but a friend, and disliked the singularity of what he called "her novelties," *i.e.* new-fangled ways. "These novelties consisted," she says, "in having nothing of one's own, in observing the strict enclosure, in dressing simply, in observing the days of fasting and of abstinence, and, in short, in keeping our rule." There were worse things behind, at which the Mother hinted; as yet the reform had not yet extended to the Monasteries which supplied confessors to Convents. No Protestant could have had a stronger dislike than Mère Angélique for anything like familiarity with religious, or a keener suspicion of those who were monks only in name.

She was never blind, or anything but strongly sensible in her views of life and of conduct. Fortitude and prudence were two of her great gifts. And though in the end things turned out badly for Port Royal, it does not seem that the principle which had led Angélique to put her Abbey under the immediate jurisdiction of the Archbishop was anything but right, at least according to modern ideas. Anything more disastrous than the independence of Episcopal authority existing in many Religious Orders can hardly be imagined, and a

recent biography of an eminent Cardinal has shown that the danger is by no means an imaginary one in the Roman Communion. It was not Mère Angélique's fault that the Church, so far as the majority of French Bishops were concerned, betrayed her Master and His Cause to the world, as represented by the French Court and—the Jesuits.

Pope Urban VIII. gave the required permission, and the Abbey of Port Royal was removed from all dependence on Cîteaux, and the inmates allowed to move their domicile. A house was bought in the Faubourg St Jacques. Mme. Arnauld helped to conclude the bargain; the building was hastily transformed into a Convent, and the nuns of Port Royal were finally established there in 1626. Angélique deplored greatly the absence of "clôture" which prevailed for a month while they were settling in. They were obliged to see many people. At last permission came to the weary Abbess to close the doors upon herself and her Community. "Que je suis lasse du monde," Angélique said. A Chaplain was left to serve the Church at Port Royal. This removal to Paris brought endless worries from the very first to Mère Angélique. The house was much too small, and building had to be undertaken. A certain Mme. de Pontcarré lent money, debts were incurred, and, to quote M. de Sainte Beuve, "Port Royal au temporel comme au spirituel se dérangeait; . . . notre vraie patrie à nous qui aimons Port Royal, sera toujours aux Champs." Mère Angélique said, years afterwards: "After all, once we were settled in, we owed nothing. We ought of course to have built bit by bit what we could afford. But M. de Langres, who then directed us, induced us to borrow money, on the plea that the dowries of rich nuns could be employed in defraying our debts" (M. de Langres took excellent care not to lend any money himself on the security of future dowries). She goes on to say that in all the anxiety and worry of these miserable debts and the sleepless nights and the many tears, she was never once tempted to refuse poor

and dowerless maidens. St Cyran severely reproved Angélique in after days, for which reproof she was intensely grateful. St Cyran's prophecies to her that her debts would be paid not by rich nuns but by God, were fulfilled to some extent, for various people did help her in her money difficulties.

She much disliked borrowing money, and still more she hated receiving people of whose vocations she was not certain, for the sake of large dowries. And she also felt that it was most undesirable that any relation of a religious should, on account of large gifts, think that he (or she) had a right to interfere in the affairs of Port Royal. "We have been so fortunate," she writes; "no relation has ever meddled with us, and I think God removed one who might have given us much trouble, friendly though he was."

Mme. de Pontcarré entered Port Royal in 1626. She had separated from her husband, and appeared at first extremely meek, asking "so little, and asking so humbly as to make it seem really credible that she was retiring from the world in order to give herself up to the thought of salvation." She bestowed a large sum of money on Port Royal, stipulating that it should only be returned if the Community requested her to withdraw, not if she herself withdrew.

It was about this time (1625) that Marie des Anges became, greatly against her will, Abbess of Maubuisson. The first wife of the Duc de Longueville, about whose second spouse we shall have much to say, had brought this about. Angélique's successor at Maubuisson was the half-sister of[1] Mme. de Longueville, and had fallen ill, whereupon Mme. de Longueville went to Angélique, requesting her to send one of her children as a coadjutor-Abbess; Angélique chose Marie des Anges, giving her on her departure these counsels: to give much to the poor; to receive dowerless postulants; to have nothing to do with the religious (monks) of

[1] The Duchesse de Longueville was a daughter of the Count de Soissons. The Soissons branch ended in the direct male line with the brother of this Duchess.

Pontoise; to visit the Blessed Sacrament several times during the day, and then to renew her dedication of herself to Christ.

As we have said, Marie des Anges was a true child of her spiritual Mother.

Mère Angélique made another serious change. She and her nuns then enjoyed Royal favour, and she requested Marie de' Medicis, mother of Louis XIII., to obtain for her the King's consent to the project which she entertained of making the office of Abbess elective and triennial. This favour was granted in 1629.

Before this time Angélique had come under the influence of Zamet, Bishop of Langres. Zamet was the son of an Italian money-lender who was in Henri IV.'s confidence; it was at his house that Gabrielle D'Estrées supped on the fatal night when she was taken ill.

M. de Langres had an elder brother, a gallant and worthy gentleman, a friend of M. d'Andilly, in whose arms he died at the siege of Montpelier, the last incident of the miserable war against the Huguenots of 1621 and 1622; probably the friendship of their elder brothers was known to the Bishop and Angélique. M. de Langres' early life had not been marked by piety, but illness had struck him, and when he reappeared he seemed entirely changed. He certainly showed some marks of sincerity. He left the Court, retired to Langres, and applied himself to his Episcopal duties with much diligence. He took for his adviser Cardinal de Bérulle, one of the great revivers of priestly life in France.[1] It was he who had brought to France the strict Order of the Carmelites, an order much linked with Anne of Austria, and with Anne Geneviève de Bourbon, Duchesse de Longueville.[2]

De Bérulle's great work, however, was the foundation of the Congregation of the Oratorians.

Mme. de Chantal spoke of Port Royal and of its

[1] See Mrs Sidney Lear's *Priestly Life in France.*

[2] See M. Cousin's *La Jeunesse de Mme. de Longueville.*

reform to M. de Langres: he paid a visit to Port Royal des Champs, as we must now call our true Port Royal. Mère Angélique saw him in the first glow of his conversion, and after her removal to Paris she made him her spiritual director, another mistake, and perhaps the most fatal of all. But at first all went well; he gave her sensible and pious advice, and finally quenched her desires to leave her order and enter another.

This however was the only benefit which Angélique derived from him. She says herself, with infinite humility and patience, that she had not prayed enough before taking him as her director, nor had even consulted her sister Agnès. M. de Langres and the then Duchesse de Longueville (the same lady who persuaded Angélique to send Marie des Anges to Maubuisson) had united in a design for a new order of religious, whose main *raison d'être* would be the Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Mère Angélique entered into these views, more especially as she had already at Port Royal des Champs introduced Perpetual Adoration of the Sacrament. Rather a weary time now began. The Port Royalists wished to incorporate the new order with their own, and the Bishop changed his mind every other day. The atmosphere of Port Royal, under the direction of the priests whom he introduced, gradually changed.

Up to this time the religious life of the Community had been simple. Mère Angélique made it consist in self-surrender to God; she had dwelt little on visions and dreams, on extraordinary penances or on spiritual experiences. This was changed. Endless talking, extravagant devotion, presumptuous expectations of a miracle to be worked on a deaf and dumb religious, took the place of the "recollection," silence, self-denial, and "inwardness" of the former time.

From the lofty austerity, the heights of spiritual insight, the simplicity of those who knew the "Secret of Jesus," the sanctified common sense (in all things save a due regard for health), we descend to all that is

exterior, petty, the atmosphere of that species of religious excitement which has no influence on conduct, the spirit which makes the commandment of God void through tradition; that kind of pseudo-religion most opposed to the Gospel. Our dear Mère Angélique perhaps needed this purification, this peculiar trial. She had been so successful, so applauded by her own religious world, that she may almost have required the chastening which came upon her; but one does not love those who were the instruments of her penance any better for this thought.

It was about this time that Agnès Arnauld wrote her *Chapelet du Saint Sacrement*, about which we shall speak later. M. de Langres sent her and another Sister to a Convent at Tard, in Dijon, and Marie de St Claire with another followed them.

Angélique was delighted when Agnès first went to Dijon, and enjoyed the accounts of the life at Tard. She spoke of M. de Langres as a man "tout en Dieu," and says she felt as if she and her nuns had never yet known what Religion was, "se mettant toujours du nombre des plus imparfaites." This is often so. "Only now do I begin to be a disciple," finds an echo in many souls.

In 1629 Mme. Arnauld, Angélique's mother, was allowed to begin her novitiate. She was fifty-six, yet she pronounced her vows as strongly and clearly as the most youthful and enthusiastic novice could have done. She thoroughly sympathised with Angélique on the subject of making the office of Abbess elective, and when Angélique resigned, Mme. Arnauld, now Sister Catherine, rendered the new Abbess, a woman of only twenty-nine years of age, the utmost obedience and respect.

In 1630 Mère Angélique resigned her post, Agnès resigned her office as Coadjutor, and the Community elected Geneviève Augustin le Tardif, who remained Abbess until 1636.

The new Abbess was one of the novices whom Angélique had brought from Maubuisson, but she had

been since then at Tard, and had caught its tone of thought.[1] Advised and influenced in everything by Jeanne de St Joseph (who was a former Abbess at Tard), she entered into M. de Langres' views. The Bishop disliked the poverty, simplicity, obedience of Port Royal, and it is extraordinary how the spirit of the place changed. He—detestable creature that he was—seemed set on snubbing and persecuting the former Abbess, who had put herself with all the magnanimity of a great soul into his power. He was completely incapable of appreciating her. He was that hideous compound, a *dévot* and a worldling, set on attracting great people, and on drawing attention to Port Royal. Piety was becoming fashionable, and Zamet was resolved he would not allow his Convent to be in the shade. Angélique bore her trials with humility, but with delightful dignity. She was a Christian; she was also an Arnauld.

Perhaps the worst she had to bear was the expulsion of three dowerless inmates, whom she had sheltered, and who were sent back to a life of peril.

M. de Langres grew positively to dislike Angélique, and actually forbade her to write to her Sister Agnès, or to receive Agnès's letters. In the house she, the great Abbess who had faced Madame D'Estrées, who had reformed her own Abbey,—she, the friend of St François, the St Theresa of her order, was subjected to every kind of petty and disgusting penance. But at the end of three years, deliverance came. In a fit of religious fervour, after an illness, Louis XIII. had given permission to establish the *Institut du Saint Sacrement.* But a very pretty quarrel now burst out between the Archbishop of Paris, M. de Gondi, and the two Bishops of Sens and Langres. The Archbishop was angry because the other two were to be co-Superiors with him, and the business was delayed for three years.

At last he was won over by Mme. de Longueville,

[1] But Mère Geneviève changed completely after she put herself under St Cyran's direction.—Lancelot, vol. i., p. 407.

and a house was bought. Since Mère Angélique's first acquaintance with M. de Langres, his views concerning this *Institut* had changed considerably. The nuns must wear a beautiful habit, the Church must be costly, and everything about this new *Institut* should be handsome and "modern." Mère Angélique had been nominated in the Pope's Bull as Superior, but M. de Langres thought her by no means suitable. However, the Archbishop stood firm, and Mère Angélique was duly installed. She brought with her three Port Royal Sisters, four postulants, and a lay Sister. The three Bishops seemed to be on perfectly good terms, and each in turn celebrated a Pontifical Mass on three successive days. M. de Langres was by no means disposed to let Mère Angélique alone, and insisted on associating with her in the rule one of the postulants, a certain Anne de Jésus de Foissy de Chammesson. In fact, Anne was to be a sort of spy on Angélique. She was a person of good family and a Canoness, a position which implied and entailed no special religious vocation. And one can only wonder why Angélique should have submitted to such a command as this of M. Zamet's, *i.e.*, that she the Mother, an experienced and middle-aged woman, should do nothing without consulting a young girl, who had only just "entered religion," and who, according to the ordinary rules of common sense and decorum, should have been last, not first.

Angélique says of Anne that M. de Langres had met her on the occasion of the death of her mother (a lady of noble family in Champagne), and "finding her very intelligent, very polite, and quite a suitable person of whom to make a nun, who would be able to talk to princesses, he entreated her to devote herself to God in the new *Institut;* and finding her disposed in her sorrow to do so, he promptly sent her there."

Mère Angélique goes on to describe how imperious this unwelcome young woman became, and how at length she wore out M. de Langres' patience.

When M. de St Cyran took the direction of the consciences of Mère Angélique's Community, Mlle. de

Chammesson, who had quarrelled with M. de Langres, put herself under his direction; but when he quietly took her at her word, and agreed with her that her position was most unbecoming and dangerous as far as her spiritual condition was concerned, she promptly threw him over and returned to M. de Langres.

Angélique gave herself up to her new Community with the same whole-hearted devotion that she had ever shown.

A storm suddenly burst upon the Community. The three Bishops could not agree, and Agnes Arnauld's little devotional manuscript, *Le Chapelet Secret*, of which very few copies existed, was the excuse.

Le Chapelet Secret was a meditation, divided into sixteen "points," in honour of the sixteen centuries which had rolled away since our Lord instituted the Eucharist. Mother Agnès had written out her meditations in obedience to her director, Père Condren, one of the Priests of the Oratory. Each point had attached to it one of the attributes of our Blessed Lord—Holiness, Dominion, and so on. It was simply a meditation of a holy soul, endowed with the power of entering into joy, of climbing heights of mystic, ecstatic devotion.

Père Condren, who was certainly a holy and experienced priest, of whom it has been said that "if God had sent François de Sâles to teach men, Condren seemed fit to teach angels"[1]—approved the writing, as did M. de Langres, who liked Mère Agnès, and succeeded for a time, at least to some extent, in alienating her and her sister Marie Claire from Mère Angélique.

No one except Condren and the Bishop knew the authorship for some years (it was written in 1627). One of the Mothers of the Carmelites was supposed to be its author, as a copy was found in her cell at her death, and the book was approved by the strict and orthodox Carmelites.

But the Archbishop of Sens found it convenient in 1633 to throw some suspicion on this kind of

[1] See Mrs Sidney Lear's *Priestly Life in France.*

ecstatic devotion, procured its condemnation by the Superior of the Carmelites, sent the poor little innocent meditation to Rome, and even wrote a little "brochure" against it. In vain did Mère Angélique, much surprised at this outbreak, search for a copy at Port Royal; she could only get one, which happened to be at Maubuisson, and was in the hands of the Abbess Marie des Anges.

She sent it straight to M. de St Cyran, who was at this time a friend of M. de Langres. He replied that *he* could find nothing at which to cavil.

Poor Agnès, who was at Tard, was not a little surprised, not a little grieved, at this sudden storm which had broken on her innocent head.

She writes to M. d'Andilly, her eldest brother, now the head of the family :—

"I have just heard that a persecution has broken out against this monastery [the *Institut du Sacrement*], of which I am said to be the cause, on account of a little bit of writing I did six years ago, merely to express some thoughts which had come to me, without any wish either to use them or to speak of them to any one else. I cannot understand how so small a thing has suddenly become so important, and should cause this establishment to lose the favour promised to it. . . . I complain to you of this sorrow; gladly would I exchange it for something else, if our Lord gave me my choice, but when He wishes us to suffer He knows exactly how to touch us in our tenderest part."

M. de Langres took the side of the *Chapelet*, and induced the theological faculty at Louvain to give their opinion.

Two of the learned divines, one of whom was no less a person than Jansenius, declared the *Chapelet Secret* to be above all reproach; it only expressed the innocent transport of devotion of a soul "inebriated with God, and changed into the likeness of Jesus Christ."

The age of the Quietists had not yet dawned, and no

disturbance ensued. As Agnès never dreamed of any publicity, she had taken no care to guard herself from being misunderstood. She appears rather to have inclined to these expressions of disinterested love which are familiar to us in St Francis Xavier's hymn—

> "My God, I love Thee, not because
> I hope for heaven thereby," etc.

Indeed, as Dom Clemencet remarks (*Histoire de Port Royal*), those who treat of mystical theology are often understood in different ways, in a good sense by some, in a bad sense by others. This has happened to Tauler, to Ruysbrock, and to many another.

M. St Cyran about this time began, at M. de Langres' request, to undertake the direction of the Port Royalist nuns, and then of the *Institut du Saint Sacrement.*

A revival sprang up, and the nuns one by one made a general confession to St Cyran, and last of all Mère Angélique did the same. As one of the historians of Port Royal says, she had made several general confessions, always with fresh profit. "Perfection consists in fresh beginnings," has been said, and said truly.

A set of Resolutions written by her at this time was afterwards found :—

1. Every morning I will pray God that I may live and die in penitence.
2. I will try in every lawful way to quit my office (as Abbess), and when God has granted me this mercy I will never accept another office.
3. So long as it pleases Him that I should remain in my office, I will undertake nothing either for spiritual or temporal affairs save in obedience.
4. I will converse with my Sisters as humbly as I can. I will never reprove them for their faults just when those faults have been committed, nor when they are the first occasions of such faults, nor before I have prayed God to give me grace to do

it through His Spirit, and to help them to receive it as He would have them.

5. I will cease to watch over them [the Sisters] so much, trusting rather to God's guidance for them than in needless cares.
6. I will speak as little as possible. I will use writing or signs when it is possible.
7. I will avoid as much as possible going to the parlour [visitors' room], and when I am not in office I will not go at all, not even for my relations. When I am obliged to go, I will speak as little as possible, not asking for news and avoiding hearing any.
8. When I am not in office, I will try to be alone all my life.
9. I will bear my infirmities without seeking alleviations, and will not call in a doctor without being expressly permitted. If God takes away my ailments I will do some penance daily, so far as I am allowed.
10. I will try to live as simply as I can so far as regards food, only taking what is absolutely necessary and choosing the worst. I will not take fruit or salad, or any thing not needful. And for dress and bedding, the same rule.
11. I will only write necessary letters, and I will try to be forgotten and to forget creatures [happily this last could not be carried out]. When I write, I will do so as simply as possible; and if any thing seems affected in a letter, I will write another.
12. I will remember always that as I have misused everything, I must deprive myself of everything. If innocent persons sacrifice to God the things which they have not misused, in order to please Him, much more ought not I who have offended Him in everything, to cut myself off from everything. I pray God to give me courage never to receive any sensible or spiritual satisfaction except in the hope of His mercy.

Day of the Assumption, 1635.

Mlle. de Ligny (afterwards the Mère Madeleine de Ligny) tells us that

"It can really be said that there was a real Pentecost among us, which changed and renewed all the Sisters, excepting only the Sister Anne de Jésus, who seemed to be in the Convent for no other purpose than to exercise Mère Angélique's patience. . . .

"Our special devotion was the imitation of the first disciples in three things—

"1. Docility in obeying God's will.

"2. Separation from the world.

"3. Union with one another.

"The Mother seemed to have ever in her mind the words of St Francis: 'Perfection consists not in doing out-of-the-way or remarkable things, but it does consist in doing ordinary things extraordinarily well.' And indeed it could be said with truth, that there was among us only one heart and one mind."

The same narrator goes on to describe the extreme sympathy and mutual deference and respect which prevailed, the obedience, the absolute quiet and recollection, and the detachment from the world. It was not, as Mère Angélique said, that M. de St Cyran "directed great austerities or singular mortifications; but what he did try to instil into the hearts of those whom he directed, was a real sense of sin, a real desire to please God."

Even Angélique's peculiar thorn in the flesh, Anne de Jésus, was roused, and made, as we have said, a confession to M. de St Cyran. She was extremely surprised and disgusted at being taken at her word and deprived of the Mistress-ship of the Novices, a post which, as she had justly remarked, was hardly a fitting one for her. M. de Langres was rather vexed with his protegée's letters on this head, but on his return to Paris, he too took up the line of marked coldness to St Cyran. One of his great ladies, Madame de Longueville, was displeased by the new *régime*, and this was enough for him. Just at that time he fell ill, and sending for St Cyran, unburdened his conscience to him. As

before, on recovery, his good resolutions faded away, and he began a desultory, idle life, spending long hours in conversations with Madame de Pontcarré and his especial friend, Anne de Jésus.

Angélique was thoroughly tired out, and she made up her mind to yield the direction of the *Institut du Saint Sacrement* into the hands of the Archbishop of Paris. She asked M. de Paris to allow her to resign in favour of the Abbess of Port Royal, Mère Geneviève. The Archbishop agreed, and the exchange was quickly and quietly made. In a very short time Mère Geneviève got rid of Anne de Jésus; this offended M. de Langres; he ceased to visit the House, and from this time he completely broke with St Cyran.

The *Institut* was now in complete peace under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of Paris. A little bit of persecution burst out, it is true, stirred up by Anne de Jésus.

A certain Madame de Ligny had died a short time before this: she had been a great friend to the *Institut*, and was a truly holy woman. She left her daughter to be educated at the *Institut*, and that mischievous marplot, Anne de Jésus, on leaving the *Institut* went to the Carmelites and stirred up the Abbess (who was a sister of Madame de Ligny) to believe that M. de St Cyran was teaching all manner of new doctrines. The Abbess at once wrote to her two brothers, one of whom was Séguier, the then Chancellor, and the other the Bishop of Meaux, begging them to take away her niece from those dangerous influences. M. de St Cyran was asked not to see Mlle. de Ligny. He at once withdrew, and gave to the *Institut* as his successor M. Singlin, of whom we shall have much to say. Mère Angélique said once of him that it had given her intense peace when she was really sure that M. Singlin would not spare her, and that he was free to reprove her—"but, nevertheless," she went on, "sometimes people are vexed at being treated gently. One cannot bear the humiliation of being treated as a feeble soul, one does not even wish to confess one's weakness." But Mlle. de Ligny told her uncle, the

Bishop of Meaux, that she wished to be a nun, and a nun of this Community only, and this resolution she owed entirely to the holy teaching of M. de St Cyran. She told him how utterly unfounded were the reports that St Cyran was unsound on the subject of the Eucharist, and of the necessity of frequent Communion. The Bishop was satisfied, and left his niece alone. At the same time Mère Angélique underwent an examination on the subjects of Confession and Communion, and completely satisfied the Archbishop of Paris.

There had been some attempt to restore the jurisdiction of the monks of Cîteaux over Port Royal. One of the most fervent and holy of the Sisters, Suzanne de Henin de Roche, during the illness of the Abbess Mère Geneviève, had tried to effect this. She was frightened by the lack of devotion which she saw in M. de Langres. Fortunately M. de St Cyran was able to prevent this. Oddly enough, years afterwards, at Maubuisson (where she became Abbess in succession to Marie des Anges), she was obliged to send away the monks of Cîteaux.

Mère Angélique had been very fond of Suzanne, who was a holy nun, but much addicted to extraordinary devotions and novel practices, and the wise Mother always distrusted these.

Mère Angélique's letters, which seem to have been collected from the year 1620, are of great interest. She wrote many to the Mère de Chantal, the foundress of the Order of the Visitation, who owed so much to, and who was so great a friend of St François de Sâles. She corresponded with a priest of Boulogne, M. Macquet, for about thirty years, and he seems often to have asked spiritual advice. He was confessor to a Religious House at Boulogne, and she gave him much aid in drawing up rules for them. "I confess to you," she writes, "I should much prefer a convent which was quite without rules to one which had been half reformed. There is more hope of amendment in the first." She also exhorts him to have a priest who could if need were take his place; also she begs him to watch over his parish, and lays her finger on what is often a weak spot

in our own Communion—the lack of instruction. "Often," she says, "good simple people are left without instruction; they do not understand the greater part of the sermons they hear, and a word they do not understand makes them lose the whole meaning of what has been said."

"And these souls," she cries, implying ever so gently that the good Father had neglected his parish for his nuns, "these souls are as dear to God as are the souls of religious; they are incorporated into Christ by baptism, they have been devoted to His service, which is something much more serious than is commonly supposed. I own there seems to me to be a great difference between the precepts of the Gospel and the ordinary standard of our day," writes Angélique, an observation constantly repeated in every age.

Writing to one who had a great desire to enter Religion, she says: "It is a great mistake which many people make, to their great injury, to think that people living in the world are not as much bound to be good as are those in Religion."

There are many letters to her eldest brother, M. d'Andilly, and a pleasant little word occurs in one of them about his daughter Angélique, who was brought up from her early days at Port Royal, and who was destined to be a second Mère Angélique.

Her letters to her own "daughters" are wonderful in their strength, their lofty standard, their profound humility, which deepened as time went on.

"My dear old friend (ma chère vieille)," she writes to one who was frightened at the threatening of persecution in 1652, "whatever happens, do not be astonished, and let not your heart be troubled. I say to you as our Lord said it to His Disciples, He will be our support, if we fear Him and hope in Him. We show our faith in difficult times. When all is lost, then all is gained by faith and the grace of Jesus Christ."

She writes of a Superior: "This good Mother has plenty of good intentions, but she is a little too self-confident, and as you say, more occupied to make others

good than to be good herself, which makes her run the risk of never doing anything for herself or for other people." How true this is of many in authority.

Mère Angélique had the most profound self-distrust. She writes: "How happy I should be, if I could only begin a life of penitence and stay in it until I die."

Writing of one who was causing anxiety, she says: "Souls waste a great deal of time, until they are truly resolved to serve God without any reserve."

Mère Angélique had a great objection to any extravagant devotions. She hated any talk about miracles supposed to have occurred. "It is greatly the fashion," she writes, "to wish to honour God, the Holy Mother, and the Saints only by miracles, and talk. If only people would remember that the Blessed Virgin honoured God more by concealing the incomparable Mystery which the Holy Ghost had worked in her than all the Saints have done by the proclaiming the wonders God has worked for them!"

We may add, in anticipation, that in 1636, shortly after the Clothing of six novices by the Archbishop of Paris, the inmates of the *Institut*, at the Archbishop's suggestion, closed their house and returned to Port Royal de Paris, where they were received with great joy by Agnès their Abbess, and Angélique the Mistress of the Novices.

CHAPTER IV

THE PERIOD OF M. DE ST CYRAN (1636-1638)

St Cyran was now the director, the guide, the one ruling influence of Port Royal. He exercised the final, the permanent influence on the spirit and the fortunes of the Port Royalists. One by one every religious at Port Royal yielded herself to his direction, and the Community received its final stamp. If St François de Sâles gave Port Royal something of the winning love, large-heartedness, which were all his own, St Cyran stamped on Port Royal his peculiar sternness, his "fear of the Lord," his "rejoicing with trembling," his complete freedom from any "fear of man."

Port Royal was now for ever to be connected through good report and evil report with certain great names—the Arnaulds, M. Le Maître, St Cyran, Pascal, and many more. The mistakes of the years between 1626-1636 were never to be repeated. For them there would be no more seeking after great things, or great people, but the eternal principles of righteousness, the service of God, austere, perhaps, but lofty, pure, untouched, unspoilt by the subtle spirit of the world. Such were the Port Royalists.

Jean du Vergier de Hauranne was born at Bayonne in 1581. His family was good. He studied theology at Bayonne and at Louvain, and subsequently at Paris, where he formed his life-long friendship with Jansenius. Oddly enough, the Jesuits were his first masters.

In 1611 Du Vergier received a Canonry in Bayonne Cathedral, and in this, his native town, he spent some

years in company with his friend Jansenius. The two friends devoted themselves to a close study of St Augustine in particular and the Fathers in general, and laid the foundations of their deep knowledge of Theology, and of their views on Grace which were to bring them into such sharp antagonism with the Jesuits.

Du Vergier passed from Bayonne to Tours in the wake of his Bishop, who had been translated to that Diocese, and then removed to Poitiers, where the then Bishop (who was a pupil of the great Scaliger, and could appreciate real learning) bestowed on him the Abbey of St Cyran.[1] He is known always from this time as M. de St Cyran.

St Cyran seems to have come to Paris about 1633, and to have renewed his acquaintance with the Arnauld family. For years, ever since 1620, he had known M. d'Andilly and Mme. Arnauld, the mother of Angélique and "tous les nôtres." We have seen how he wrote to congratulate Angélique on her courage in receiving at Maubuisson and in taking back with her to Port Royal, dowerless nuns.

M. d'Andilly was a great friend of the then Bishop of Aire, in Gascony, who was a brother of d'Andilly's friend, M. Bouthillier, to whom St Cyran had been introduced by Richelieu during the latter's episcopate of Luçon. D'Andilly says: "The Bishop of Aire, who was so great a friend of mine, that I really feel he loved no one better than he loved me, often said to me that if M. de St Cyran and I and he were ever all together in one place, he would bestow on me a priceless gift by making St Cyran my friend. And this came to pass at Poitiers, where M. de St Cyran then lived. M. D'Aire took us both by the hand, and said to M. de St Cyran, to whom he had often spoken of me: 'Here is M. D'Andilly'; and to me, 'Here is M. de St Cyran'; and these few words were enough to unite us; our friendship began that moment and lasted until his death; a more perfect or a greater friendship there could not be in this world."

[1] On the borders of Touraine.

These years (1623-1638) were at first prosperous. St Cyran was associated with leading ecclesiastics. He was a friend of the Oratorians. Charles Condren, De Bérulle and others, and no less a person than Richelieu himself, had made attempts to attach him to the party of the Cardinal. Ever since (according to Lancelot) the days of St Cyran's residence at Poitiers, Richelieu and he had been acquainted. Richelieu was then Bishop of Luçon, and did not come to Paris until 1616. Lancelot points out in his *Mémoires* how indirectly St Cyran owed his acquaintance with d'Andilly and others to Richelieu.

Richelieu was at all times a good judge of character, and unlike the second persecutor of Port Royal, Louis XIV., he had a great liking for people who were clever and learned. He did his best to win St Cyran, whose piety he perceived was as genuine as his scholarship. It was in vain, and Richelieu's friendship soon changed into hatred. St Cyran steadily refused various honourable offices (amongst others, the Bishoprics of Clermont and Bayonne), always going to thank the Cardinal for his kindness after each offer, but always resolute in his refusal. "It is not," said he, in a conversation which Lancelot records,—"it is not that I should not have been thankful to have received the Grace of Consecration; it is the highest Gift in the Church, and I would have gone to the ends of the earth for it; but one must be well assured that God has really spoken to one, that it is He Who calls and Who wishes to bestow that Grace."

Racine says that this steady refusal first excited Richelieu's dislike. In spite of the great Cardinal's astuteness, he was incapable of appreciating a saint, and tried in vain to corrupt St Cyran by flattery; pointing him out at one of his receptions to the admiring crowd of hangers-on as "the most learned man in Europe."

Richelieu held very completely the idea that anyone who was not for him was against him; and his "âme damnée," Père Joseph, was not slow in slandering the

independent ecclesiastic, who was far too clever not to be dangerous, and whose opposition to two schemes, one at least extremely discreditable to Richelieu, completely alienated the Minister.

Gaston, Duke of Orleans (the Monsieur of the Fronde), had married Marguerite de Lorraine, and Richelieu in 1634 had persuaded the Parlement to declare the marriage null and void; in 1636 he contrived to make the Clergy equally subservient. Sainte Beuve points out that St Cyran's opinion was not formally asked, but, as Lancelot says in his *Mémoires*, the Minister was fully persuaded that he disapproved of the attempt to break Gaston's marriage. Gaston had retired from France, leaving his friends to suffer the vengeance of Richelieu, whose project in marrying Orleans to his own niece was defeated. The real cause, however, of Richelieu's enmity was his failure to attach St Cyran to the service of his darling project, *i.e.*, the foundation of a Patriarchate in France—a real independent Gallican Church. There were more offences to be laid at St Cyran's door, but evidently Lancelot considers this the crowning one.

After the little storm raised by the good offices of Mme. de Chammesson there was peace and quiet at Port Royal and its daughter house, the *Institut du Saint Sacrement*. In September 1636 several Professions were made, both of lay and of choir Sisters, among them that of Agnès Arnauld d'Andilly, the daughter of M. d'Andilly, and Madeleine de Sainte Agnès de Ligny. Agnès Arnauld had also returned from Tard, at the request of her sister, to Port Royal, and her gentle, holy, loyal soul was at first greatly stirred by the exclusion of the Bishop of Langres, who had appeared to her to be a saint of God. At first the relations between the two Arnauld sisters were decidedly strained, and the Sisters who had returned with Agnès —among these Marie Claire Arnauld—were even more outspoken. It was all unspeakably small and ridiculous; and the opposition was chiefly due to Mme. de Pontcarré, who had stirred up Agnès, but it was extremely

painful to Angélique. Agnès's eyes were soon opened; a conversation with St Cyran enlightened her, but it is not improbable that the Bishop of Langres' first visit and the change for the worse which had befallen him had a good deal to do with Agnès's quick perception that her sister was right.

Mme. de Pontcarré was living at Port Royal in the luxurious religious retirement to which she had betaken herself. She created a party in Port Royal, gathering round her the discontented new arrivals, chief of whom was Marie Claire, who was in many respects a saint and whose misery was very great. It was just at this time that Angélique returned to Port Royal, of which Agnès had been elected Abbess, by a majority of votes, in September 1636. She, with great good sense and discretion, wrote respectfully but very firmly to M. de Langres, and asked him to cease visiting Port Royal. Mme. de Pontecarré shortly afterwards left.

Agnès de Ligni, in a relation she has left, which is to be found in *Mémoires pour servir*, says, in a description of the life led by the Community under St Cyran's directions:

"We were taught to love prayer, as being the most sure way of drawing down on us God's grace, which we need . . . and particularly to love the prayers of the Church, and those prayers said in common." Agnès goes on to say how "recollected" and devout the Community became. She continues:

"But as it is not enough to pray only when reciting offices, and in set times of prayer, but prayer must be never ceasing, as we are taught in the Gospel; so we were taught that this continual prayer consists in aspirations of the heart, in the wish to be wholly given to God, wholly desirous of pleasing Him—and that this did not need much effort of intelligence, but only care to open one's heart to God and let Him fill it with His grace, and empty it of all vain desires and distractions so that He can fill it.

"We were taught by the Mother the great need of humility and of consideration. She wished us to take

care never to do anything which could disturb others, even in the smallest ways. A person who is really humble will take care even to shut a door gently, will not always try to get the most comfortable place, and so on, always considering others before oneself."

Mère Angélique did not wish her religious to be discouraged. "If one of us fell, she was to rise soon, trusting only to God. She said, all things work together in God for souls who love Him, even their faults make them more humble, more distrustful of themselves, more dependent on God."

Mère Angélique was Mistress of the Novices, and her instructions to them were so edifying that several professed Sisters begged to be allowed to hear them. She tried by example and precept to fill the novices with the spirit of self-denial and of charity, and her own kindness and generosity were unbounded.

The Mother's love for Retreat was very great, and sometimes she allowed some of the other Sisters to share her Retreat, a privilege which they greatly valued.

There is no doubt, however, that Angélique laid herself open to the reproach levelled at Port Royal, of overmuch withdrawal from Holy Communion. She owns that one year, while Port Royal was still under M. de Langres' direction, she cut herself off from Communion from Easter until August; this, however, was not in any way due to M. St Cyran, who does not seem to have encouraged or enjoined such serious deprivations. In a letter to her constant correspondent, M. Macquet, she writes somewhat unsympathetically of those religious who profess a great hunger for the Heavenly Food. Unconsciously she lays bare the weakness of Port Royal. There was holy awe, but not much "boldness of access," not much perception of the fact that the Lord's "delight is to be with the sons of men," that He yearns to give Himself to them.

Marie Claire, the youngest but one of the Arnauld sisters, the saintly, holy, obedient little nun, still held

out against St Cyran, and neither Agnès nor Angélique could do anything to persuade her.

D'Andilly, who as we know was deeply attached to St Cyran, was perhaps even more so after his wife's death, when he says, "God used him (St Cyran) to strengthen me against the greatest affliction which can be endured in this life," and he remonstrated with Marie Claire.

At first he met with no success; but one day he asked her to kneel down and pray with him. Perhaps Marie Claire was already beginning to yield, but whether that was so or not, she rose from her knees with new light breaking on her soul. Marie's repentance was that of a saint. She had been led astray by extravagance and self-chosen ways of devotion. Now she came back to that simple self-surrender, that absolute sacrifice of spirit, soul, and body, which belong to those who bear in their bodies the marks of the Lord Jesus.

She yielded absolute submission to her sister and Superior, Mère Agnès, and little by little the bewilderment caused by M. de Langres' unhappy influence was cleared away.

Marie wrote a letter to St Cyran which is very touching and beautiful:

"My father, I very much wished to conceal the very great desire which came to me on the day of the Assumption, to put my soul into your hands, and to beg you for the sake of the Divine Mercy to show me the true ways of penitence. For as I recognise how greatly I scorned that grace in the day of the blindness of my soul and the hardness of my heart, I feel how wrong it is to aspire to this blessing, and how just it would be if God did not grant it to me. But I confess, my father, that I find it impossible not to speak to you, because I am so strongly moved to begin anew (me convertir) without any delay. You are at liberty to refuse me, but I am not free to withdraw, and you must command me to do so before I cease to implore you. I have little hope of being received by you, and many reasons lead me to believe that you will not

burden yourself with a soul so miserable, so sunk in sin as is mine. Nevertheless I do not despair ; I know the mercies of God are boundless, and possibly He may lead you to this work of extraordinary charity. I have some reason to hope in His goodness, seeing the state out of which He has drawn me. I look back on it with terror, and all my life is so guilty that I hardly dare to promise myself the grace of penitence. I know that God can save me, but why should He? I adore the judgments He will award me with awe and peace, and also whatever it will please you to do with me."

St Cyran was not at all of the school of either Fénélon or of St François de Sâles. He was not particularly tender, nor anxious to help her, but he was unsparing alike of himself and of her.

But the few words about Marie Claire after her death, written from his prison, show the depth of affection which he almost conceals. As M. Sainte Beuve says, he was pre-eminently a director, a spiritual guide, and he saw the precise point which had led Marie Claire astray, and the possibilities of holiness to which she could and did attain. At first he thought that she would get more help from another priest, but one day he met her at Port Royal, and said : "I neither wished nor intended to see you, but having gone into Church, I found myself obliged to ask for you. . . . Now what is it you want? show me your wounds."

After some conversation he said : "Outside work of penitence must proceed from the inward spirit of sorrow, and there must be some correspondence between the two. One must be careful not to express outwardly beyond what one feels inwardly."

Marie Claire made her first confession to him in February 1637, and it is very interesting to note the sort of advice given. Counsels to inwardness, absolute self-surrender (the mark of saints in every age) were ever on his lips. When she began her confession, full as she was of penitence, he warned her to beware of any exaggeration, or extreme self-analysis. These words are remarkable. "God is a spirit, and spiritual sins

offend Him most." Perhaps one sees what he means when one thinks of the standard of the Sermon on the Mount, in which Christians are taught to aim at *being* rather than *doing*, and in which sins of thought are put on a level with sins of action. There are many other axioms of interest. He observes:

"It is a great mistake to direct every soul in the same way; each individual soul must have its individual rule. Several things can be done by innocent souls which are dangerous for souls wounded by sin, which, although healed by penitence, are not free from the weaknesses which their wounds have caused them. A soldier who has been seriously wounded may feel the effect all his life of changes of weather, and does not expose himself to fog and snow. I cannot therefore leave you quite free. . . . I am the doctor who must prescribe the remedy. It lies in mortification, as you wish. The way is narrow; to say otherwise is to deceive. Finally, it is an elementary rule of penitence that those who have sinned by committing unlawful actions, must deny themselves in things which are lawful."

He has a word about the Penitential Psalms, how suitable each word is for the sicknesses of the soul, and Sainte Beuve remarks the irony of his words when speaking of David's penitence: "It is a marvel that, being a *king*, he could be a real penitent."

Humility was a particular note of St Cyran's first discourse to Marie. He warns her against any extravagance. "We are not saints," he says; "we cannot do things saints did. We must, so to speak, let nothing appear in us which is not quite usual." This reminds us of our own Keble. It is a thought all would do well to consider.

Marie Claire at her own wish became for a time a lay Sister, doing the work of the house and living a life of penitence. At first she was not always happy—and she turned for help to St Cyran, who replied in these words, which find an echo in many a faithful heart: "Fili, accedens ad servitutem Dei, . . . prepara animam tuam ad tentationem" (Ecclesiasticus ii. 1). "My

son, if thou come to serve the Lord, prepare thy soul for temptation."

He told her to forget the past, to live in gentleness and forbearance, and above all—joy. "God is infinitely gentle to souls who are *in* the Way; He is infinitely terrible to those who follow a wrong road. He does not consider the past sin of the soul who is seeking His Kingdom."

St Cyran is particularly careful to warn his penitent against any undue trust in himself. Marie wrote down what he had said to her, and sent her notes to him to read. He replied with complete common sense, that it was right to keep notes of what had been said, only she must remember St Paul's words about those who plant and water, and God who alone gives the increase.

The more one reads St Cyran the more one is struck by his manliness, his complete absence of anything like softness or sentimentality, and also by his common sense, his insight, his self-abnegation. He had the prejudices of his age, the defects of his qualities, but there is something about him which should appeal much to English minds, to all healthy Christians. In 1638, as we shall see, St Cyran was arrested, and Marie Claire never saw him again. She passed under M. Singlin's direction, and lived only until 1642. She spent most of her time in copying the letters written by St Cyran from prison, but led the life of prayer and work with never-failing perseverance and joy and love and gentleness. In a letter written to St Cyran, she says: "I receive Holy Communion in wonderful trust, for I have always in my mind the Apostle's words—"Habemus redemptionem per sanguinem ejus, remissionem peccatorum. . . . I look on Jesus Christ as the one source of holiness." Marie Claire's last words were, 'victoire, victoire.'"

When St Cyran heard of her death in 1642, he wrote a long letter to her sister, Madame Le Maître (in religion Soeur Catherine de St Jean), in which he said:

"Indeed it is right that we should regret our departed one when we remember what she was: it is rare to meet in the religious life such souls as hers. Her good qualities themselves made me restrained with her, for I did not wish her to regard me with too great affection, and I tried to avoid this. I wished her to love as the blessed souls themselves are loved, more in one's heart than with one's lips, and more by feelings than by extravagant expressions."

It would be well now to say a little about St Cyran's relations with others. Lancelot, who left two volumes of Memoirs of M. de St Cyran, is one of the most attractive of all the secondary figures which surround Port Royal. One pictures to oneself the grave, gentle boy, "an Israelite without guile" from his earliest years; passing under the influence of his great teacher, becoming in his time the noted educationalist, so well known that a Princess of Royal blood entrusted him with the care of her boys; always in prosperity and in adversity grave, serene, with little thought of himself, possessed with the profoundest admiration for the "Messieurs de Port Royal," himself one of the oldest survivors.[1]

Claude Lancelot was born in 1615, and at the age of twelve was devoted to the Priesthood and was brought up in the Community of St Nicholas. As he grew up, a sort of restlessness came over him which he describes himself in the first pages of his Memoirs. He says of the Community of St Nicholas, "that its founder, M. Bourdoise, seems to have been sent with others to remedy some of the greater evils of the Priesthood, and, so to speak, to prepare the way for St Cyran. St Nicholas was the first Community of Priests ever established in Paris, and a Seminary was added in 1644 by the Archbishop of Paris. Adrian Bourdoise, the prime mover of this scheme, seems to have been very kind to Lancelot, to whom he gave minor orders; his first little exhortation to the boy was never forgotten.

Lancelot seems, on looking back to those early years of his clerical life, to have felt the absence of real inward

[1] Lancelot died in 1695.

spiritual teaching. For that he had to wait. He says in those first pages some striking words—words which bear repeating again and again: "For He (Jesus Christ) is alone the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and one only shares in His Life by the knowledge and the Love of the Truth." For indeed this was the great task of the Port Royalists, of these particular leaders of Religion—to teach that Spiritual Religion is inwardness, union with our Lord. Lancelot stayed ten years in this Community, but never could make up his mind to join it—why, he could not exactly say. A sort of instinct held him back from taking priests' orders, and finally becoming one of the Fathers of St Nicholas. Vague ideas of becoming a religious crossed his mind; he even thought of the Jesuits, attracted, as he felt himself, by the lives of some of the noble founders and first members of that order. But that design came to nothing. He finished his course of classical studies still undecided as to the exact way in which he would dedicate himself. About 1635 a certain priest, whom Lancelot does not name, came to St Nicholas and became his great friend. Very soon Lancelot confided his spiritual needs to his friend, who gave him, as it were, a little touch of Port Royalism, as it was known afterwards, by observing: "Your excellent Superior thinks that you need only shout loud enough, and heretics are sure to be converted. That is not St Augustine's way of thinking. I only know one man who has fully grasped this truth." "Who is that?" asked Lancelot. "The Abbé St Cyran," replied this priest. Lancelot was impressed by this and by what he heard of St Cyran, who was described as a second St Augustine. St Cyran was known and esteemed by the Superior of St Nicholas.

But Lancelot, even when there was an opportunity of an interview, hung back and satisfied himself with secondhand accounts of conversations with M. de St Cyran given to him by a friend whose confessor St Cyran was. Two years passed away. About this time two persons with whom we shall have much to do, M. Singlin and M. de Saci, put themselves under

M. de St Cyran's direction, and our own Mère Angélique made that general confession to him which brought her Abbey so completely under his influence. Lancelot says that it seemed as if in proportion as St Cyran was led to feel the need of penitence for all, so in proportion were souls, so many and so different in character, led to put themselves under his direction. Lancelot began to wish to consult St Cyran, but there seemed to be difficulties ; he was discouraged by a friend, who pointed out that he was already in a Community of which M. de St Cyran approved, and probably the latter would not sanction Lancelot's retirement from it. But, as the young student said to himself, after all he was not committed to St Nicholas, and on the conclusion of his academic studies, which was now approaching (he was reading Philosophy), he resolved to leave it.

At last the crisis came. He had won some distinction from his philosophical thesis which he had to deliver before the University of Paris, and on the evening of that day, kneeling in a church into which his really good and worthy Superior had led him to offer up his thanksgiving, the boy resolved to seek the teacher, who he felt was his real master. A friend managed to arrange an interview, and about the end of August the two met. M. de St Cyran at that time had on his hands another and, in the eyes of the world, a more illustrious person than Claude Lancelot—viz., M. Le Maître, Mére Angélique's nephew, of whom more presently. St Cyran listened to Lancelot's story, and told him to be patient and try really to find out what was his duty. After three days they met again, and St Cyran made Lancelot serve him at a Mass which he was to say for the intention of a certain friend of his, a somewhat distinguished person. This was M. Le Maître. The Mass was said in the Chapel of Port Royal de Paris. This was the first time that Lancelot heard of Port Royal. After this, St Cyran gave Lancelot permission to leave St Nicholas, and debated whether or not to send him to his friend Jansenius at Yprés or to his own Abbey, and at every interview, St Cyran's

liking for the simple, holy, guileless boy, so full of ability and of learning, grew stronger. As Lancelot says, simply: "From that time, he grew very fond of me, and I wondered how, although I was so young and so insignificant, he showed me so much kindness, and spoke to me of matters about which he was not wont to speak freely to many people."[1]

Lancelot was certainly much favoured by St Cyran's friendship. No doubt the great Abbé was touched and full of gratitude for this gift of a young, pure affection and devotion from one with whom he could claim sympathy on both sides of his work—intellectual and spiritual.

Lancelot gives a touching description of his sister's Profession as a Carmelite nun about this time, a function which deeply affected him, and which he described with tears to St Cyran, who on that day finally persuaded Lancelot to leave St Nicholas. It was a little difficult—this departure; the ties of ten years are not easily broken, and Lancelot was very anxious to hurt no one's feelings and excite no jealousy.

Naturally enough no one at St Nicholas wished to lose their best pupil, who had brought them glory. And M. de St Cyran, like most other leaders in religion who preach the stern side of the Gospel, was already a good deal disliked and suspected. The "Moderates" always dislike the "Enthusiasts," and expect discomfort from them, if nothing worse.

Lancelot chides himself for not having confided more in his Superior; he says, in excuse, that he felt it was hardly for him to set himself to indicate shortcomings in that Superior's rule.

About this time St Cyran began to speak of Le Maître, and to tell Lancelot of what this most splendid of advocates had done in retiring to a solitude and abandoning a career which seemed likely to lead to much distinction. A retreat which Lancelot made finally decided him. It had been proposed to him by

[1] *Mémoires touchant la Vie de St Cyran*, p. 20.

his present Superior, but he had taken St Cyran's advice about it. Lancelot says he took only his New Testament and the *Confessions of St Augustine* with him, and the study of these books and the quiet hours of Retreat decided him to make the final break. He says, in speaking of this Retreat, that he had lived all these years at St Nicholas and had never been advised to read one line of the New Testament in private, and that one of the Fathers had one day observed to Lancelot that for many people the study of St François' *Vie dévote* was more useful than the Gospel.

If the Port Royalists had been allowed to carry out their intentions unchecked, it is probable that the Bible would not have been so much neglected in France as it has been.

After various delays, Lancelot left for St Nicholas, and put himself under the guidance of St Cyran, who, after a few days decided to send him to Port Royal. Here we must pause and speak of what this meant.

Catherine Le Maître, the eldest and only married daughter of M. Antoine Arnauld, had five children, of whom Antoine, whose name was evidently a favourite in the Arnauld family, was the eldest. The fourth, Jean, took the name of St Elme, and had several daughters, who were all brought up at Port Royal.

The third son, Simon, a somewhat distinguished soldier, was named M. de Séricourt, and became one of the "Solitaires."

The second, Isaac, M. de Saci (apparently an anagram on Isaac) was, next to M. Le Maître, the cleverest and most distinguished. He was a priest, and of him we shall say much. The youngest, Charles, was born in 1657.

Antoine, the eldest, was brought up in the family traditions and became a celebrated advocate, recalling the fame of his grandfather. His eloquence was great, and it was said that on the days on which he spoke in court, popular preachers left their pulpits and went to swell the crowds which hung on his words. His

popularity was unbounded, his character unblemished. His mother seems to have felt little pleasure in her distinguished son's fame, and to have prayed much for his conversion, and his aunts at Port Royal were amusingly averse to his marriage, some ideas of which had crossed the young man's mind.

Perhaps it was the work of the Port Royalists, as of many others, to testify to the need and place of penitence, to show that to be a Christian is a hard and absorbing profession. It has been left to another age and to another branch of the Church to show how the Incarnation has hallowed all life, all work—that a Christian, whether he is in the world or is technically a "religious," is here not simply "pour faire son salut," nor to enter on a life of penitence only, but is to rise to joyful service.

But it seemed as if in the France of that day the sterner spirits felt the need of a great renunciation. And indeed it is and always will be so. In every age we see that there are some who feel the burden of the world's sin lie heavy on their souls and hear a voice calling on them to bear witness in their own generation to the unseen. "Cette aspiration vers une vie plus exactement parfaite entraine toujours avec elle une certain lutte avec les choses existantes."[1]

Mme. Le Maître had since her father's death lived with her brother, M. d'Andilly. (There are constant reminders of the strong family affection in the Arnaulds.)

In 1637 Robert d'Andilly lost his wife; it was her death and St Cyran's manner of helping d'Andilly in his wife's last moments which seems to have overwhelmed M. Le Maître.

He was present when the solemn words of commendation were said: "Proficiscere, anima christiana, de hoc mundo," and this most beautiful and awe-inspiring service seems to have come upon him as a message from the other world. He went into the garden and walked up and down in the clear moonlight,

[1] Faugère in the Preface to the *Letters of Mère Agnès.*

realising the awful nearness of the other world, the nothingness of this.

All his success, all the applause of "listening senates" seemed utter vanity. "God and his own soul," as Pascal says, "were to him just then the only realities."

He confided his state to St Cyran, who advised him to break off by degrees the ties which bound him to the world. He pleaded several cases, rather languidly at first, until he was roused by some sarcastic remarks of a rival, when, as is said in *Histoire de Port Royal*, M. Le Maître spoke for a week with more fire and vigour than ever. This was the last time.

St Cyran seems to have been convinced that for the fiery nature of his new convert retirement was needful, and his mother[1] proposed to build for his use a small house near Port Royal, into which house she herself planned to retire.

His withdrawal from his career made a great sensation, not only in Paris but over all France. It was unprecedented that a young successful lawyer of thirty, on the high road to fame and riches, should suddenly throw up everything and retire into complete obscurity. This was not a changed career but *no* career at all, in the world's eyes.

It was necessary for the young man to explain himself to M. Séguier, the Chancellor, whose kindness to him had been very great. To him Le Maître wrote a long letter.

Le Maître's retirement was a nine days' wonder to most people, but the Arnaulds in Port Royal rejoiced with all their hearts.

The astute worldliness of M. Arnauld *père* and M. Marion seems to have disappeared. M. d'Andilly, who had spent all his life in the atmosphere of a Court, made no objection in these hours of his own bereavement. His devotion to St Cyran was very great, and he probably felt that his nephew could only work out his own salvation in the way which St Cyran prescribed.

[1] She became a nun at Port Royal on the death of her husband.

St Cyran, as Sainte Beuve points out, is the Christian director *par excellence*. He, in this age of religious revival, stands out as the opponent of *formal* religion.

As we have seen, there had been a great revival of Religious Life among the Clergy. St Cyran's great work seems to have been to vindicate the character and the claims of true *inward* religion. He takes souls one by one and seeks, as it were, to present each one faultless before Christ.

Hence his great emphasis on the need of Grace, and of that Grace as imparted through the Sacraments.

He is in no wise a great writer in point of style, nor is he a many-sided man, nor has he any love for Art or Poetry, but he is more than any other contemporary the physician who could and who did see the sicknesses of souls, and who could and did help those who asked his aid.

In every age God seems to raise up some to bear witness to the eternal and unchangeable facts of man's sin and God's remedy, and of the importance of a change, a radical cure, in man's soul.

These truths are often slurred over, forgotten, and are said to belong to a bygone age; then some prophet arises to bear witness to the Righteousness of God, the need of correspondence with Him.

St Cyran, as M. Renan says, is one of those who have demanded most from their disciples, and who have excited in their followers the deepest affection.

Again, to quote Renan, St Cyran probed the wounds of souls, and by strengthening faith in duty through his austere discipline, has done as much for humanity as many rightly named benefactors of humanity. St Cyran brought into clear light the doctrine of Grace, Grace all-sufficient, efficacious.

St Cyran's own life was that of a continual witness to righteousness. As Sainte Beuve says, we see in him that independence of people in high places which he stamped on Port Royal. Mère Angélique had the same freedom from excessive attention to and dependence on great people.

In that century it was a rare quality. The spectacle of St François de Sâles truckling to his Duke, of Bossuet eulogising princes, is sad. We have had much the same sort of thing in England and in the English Church. St Cyran is absolutely free from any taint of fear or of flattery.

Mère Angélique writes to a priest about M. Le Maître's retirement :

"I must tell you, my father, that our nephew Le Maître has left the Law Courts and the world, for the retirement into a solitary life, God having laid His hand upon him so certainly that you would be very happy about him if you knew the details. One of his brothers (De Séricourt), who was many miles away from him, was convinced nearly at the same time, and on his return here joined him. Both of them have shut themselves up in a small house, where they serve God in a very special way."

In another letter to the Mère de Chantal (we remember that Angélique and the Mère de Chantal had been friends ever since the St François de Sâles period), Angélique says, speaking of her two nephews and of their retirement :

"Ask perseverance for them. They were so happy as to receive the blessing of the blessed one (St François de Sâles), and the eldest made his confession to him."

M. Le Maître began his new life on January 15th (the Festival of the Hermit Paul), taking up his abode in a small house built by his devoted mother, close to Port Royal in Paris. M. de St Cyran was his director, and he withdrew entirely from any connection with his former profession. There is a pretty little story of a religious who contrived a meeting with M. Le Maître in order to convince him that although a man is converted he need not break off a good work after it had been begun. This monk seems to have consulted Le Maître on some legal points.

M. Le Maître gave him the desired information, and

then spoke to him about his own Religious Profession, about his vows, in such a way that the religious was completely taken aback, and appears to have profited by the exhortations of his legal adviser.[1]

M. Le Maître refused another application from a friend in a very touching and dignified letter. He evidently recognises that for some men it is possible to serve God in the world, that it is only a certain number who are called to the vocation of Retreat. "You," he says, "pray by working for God and His Church; our labour is to pray."

Together with M. Le Maître was his younger brother, who was known to the world as M. de Séricourt. He had just managed to escape from his confinement as a prisoner in a town which the Germans had taken from his cousin, Isaac Arnauld,[2] under whom he was serving. Both the Arnaulds escaped, running extraordinary risks and undergoing hardships. Isaac Arnauld was in time to vindicate his reputation at Court, and his nephew, De Séricourt, found himself attracted to Port Royal, where he joined his elder brother. Both placed themselves under the direction of M. Singlin. De Séricourt wrote to St Cyran a letter remarkable alike for simplicity and a certain delicate charm:

"Sir,—If I might have the happiness of seeing you, I would fling myself at your knees and lay my sword at your feet as my brother has laid his pen. I have made up my mind to follow the example he gives me, and to tread in his steps; I have no other thought, except that of following Jesus Christ as my general, the chief and prince of penitents, of those who find their salvation in penitence. It is because of this wish that I have resolved to leave the world and shut myself up in retirement; provided that you think I am right, for I do not wish to do anything except what you and M. Singlin advise.

"As my brother's conversion has contributed very

[1] *Mémoires de Fontaine.*

[2] This Isaac Arnauld was a son of that Pierre Arnauld mentioned on p 5.

much in bringing about mine, I should fail in due gratitude to you—as my brother owes so much to the grace God has given him through your means—if I did not recognise that I too owe to you my conversion, which is a consequence of his. If I could obtain from you the favour of agreeing that I should shut myself up in your prison to render you any and every humble service, I hope you would see how gladly I would come. But, if I do not deserve this favour, please at least think it right that I should be with my brother, so that I may profit by his example. I know how much you care for him, and I should think myself so happy, if you would not desire to separate those whom nature has so intimately united, and whom God will unite even more."

Of M. Singlin, the coadjutor of St Cyran at Port Royal, we must now speak.

Antoine Singlin was born at Paris in 1607, and was brought up in comparatively humble circumstances. He was an apprentice to a linen-draper until about 1627. Then he was brought under the influence of St Vincent de Paul, who had already established an order of Mission Priests. St Vincent saw Singlin's gifts, and placed him in a college where his studies were hurried on and he speedily became a priest. He became Confessor and Catechist at *l'Hôpital de la Pitié*, of which his widowed mother was housekeeper and manager, and made the acquaintance of M. de St Cyran, who gave him in his own stead as Confessor to the nuns of the *Institut du Saint Sacrement.*

M. Singlin left the hospital and spent the summer of 1637 at Port Royal des Champs, in that retreat, that process of renewing, of conversion, of which all who came under St Cyran's influence felt the need. M. de St Cyran had a deep sense of the greatness, the awfulness, of the vocation to the priestly Office; M. Singlin realised, as it were, for the first time what it was to be a priest. Readers of Sainte Beuve's great work will remember how clearly he points out the distinctness and loftiness of St Cyran's views on the greatness of the priestly Office. How far removed he is from any

approximation to those reformers who would fain do away with the Apostolic Ministry and all that it implies!

Returning to Lancelot, whom we left as he was on the verge of entering Port Royal—M. de St Cyran consigned him to the care of the two brothers, and on the 20th January 1635, he arrived at Port Royal (de Paris). Here he found also M. de Singlin and a certain M. Gaudon, who did not continue in the "Way."

Lancelot felt all the joy and fervour which so often attends those who have entered once for all on the Service of Christ. "God," he says, "so disposed everything for my good and for my edification that I could not be sufficiently grateful. I was greatly touched by the charity of M. Le Maître, the gentleness of M. de Séricourt, the humility of M. Singlin, and above all by the poverty of the nuns of Port Royal."

It happened just then that those divisions, which we have described in the chapter called "The Period of M. de Langres," were healed, and Lancelot speaks in touching words of the dew of heavenly grace poured out on the Community. Several children were brought up both by the "Solitaires" and in Port Royal itself—as we know, Port Royal acquired a great educational fame. St Cyran paid regular visits to his little flock and encouraged the children or exhorted them as the case might be, and he directed or joined in the reading which he had prescribed to the Solitaires; he had set them all to work at St Augustine.

Sometimes there were lectures, generally on some portion of Holy Scripture. St Cyran seems to have had a special gift for expounding the Bible. His discourses were not prepared, and perhaps were all the better on this account.

He seems to have been continually discovering new treasures, new beauties and truths in Holy Scripture. St Cyran's life, his discourses, his studies, his prayers, were, as his loving pupil says, one perpetual oblation to God: "Vivo autem, jam non ego, vivit vero in me Christus."

One day—the Feast of the Conversion of St Paul—Lancelot specially marks. St Cyran seemed to be lifted up to Heaven, and "he raised us with him, for indeed he had a wonderful gift of filling the hearts of others with rapture, so earnest were his words, so full of heavenly unction."

St Cyran was free from self-consciousness; he spoke quite simply about his books or his sermons; he was accustomed to say that once a bit of work was done, one must lose it in God, simply adoring Him for His gifts.

"I hardly look at them again," he said one day, speaking of his writings, "but I praise God whilst I am writing, and I offer to Him all that he gives me."

He seems to have tried to communicate his thoughts to his friends to such an extent as suited each one, according to his degree of spiritual advancement. Lancelot tells us himself how it was only after he had been some time under St Cyran's direction that he really grasped what repentance implies.

"Faire Pénitence," as we know, was St Cyran's fundamental thought—"Repent."

Lancelot seems to have felt a great desire to deprive himself of the Blessed Sacrament for a time, but St Cyran would not allow it for long, and during the Holy Week of 1638, Lancelot entered into full and perfect confidence with St Cyran, made his Communion, and continued to do so regularly. This separation for a time from Holy Communion, as Lancelot says, was of benefit to him. There is no doubt something to be said for his view. He looked on himself as beginning a new life, and he seems to have felt deprivation, for a time, of Holy Communion as the most penitential of exercises. It is not the view which most Catholics would take of one who was living such a life as Lancelot's, nor does it seem to fit in with Catholic teaching on Grace. But one must always remember that after the first age of the Church the practice as to frequent or infrequent Communion has varied with varying ages, the one point of agreement being—the extreme danger of an un-

worthy reception, the wonderful grace of a good Communion.

But this happy, peaceful life was soon to be interrupted. Richelieu, as we know, had no good opinion of St Cyran, and would brook no dangerous interference either in theology or secular affairs. St Cyran had ventured to say that contrition was needful for a worthy reception of the Sacrament of Penitence ; Richelieu had affirmed in his Catechism (published when he was Bishop of Luçon) that *attrition* (a fear of God or rather a fear of the penalties of sin) was enough. To put it shortly, perfect contrition is that of which the motives are perfect, because it comes from the Love of God. Attrition is imperfect contrition, and comes from imperfect motives. Renan has one of his penetrating remarks on this: "Quand Richelieu faisait emprisonner Saint Cyran pour avoir soutenu que l'amour de Dieu était nécessaire—le cardinal n'était puéril que dans l'apparence. Louis XIII. qui avouait naîvement ne pas aimer Dieu, échappait à son confesseur et par conséquent au cardinal. Si la doctrine de l'abbé prévalait, cette substitution de l'homme à Dieu, et si j'ose le dire, cette suppression de la Divinité étant le grand mal qui mine sans cesse l'œuvre du Christ, toute réforme du Christianisme, tout réveil de l'esprit Chrétien a consisté dans un retour à la sévère doctrine de la grâce."

The fact is—religion is an affair of the soul, and there will be always revolts against official religion, whether that religion be Sacramental or Protestant. Anything more revolting than the spectacle of royal religion as seen in Louis XIII. and still more in Louis XIV. can hardly be conceived. In the same essay which I have just quoted, Renan says: "Les Religieuses de Port Royal . . . ont sauvé la conscience. Avec son sérail insolemment étalé à la face de la Chrétienté, Louis XIV. met autant qu'il dépendait de lui, la moralité française à deux doigts de celle de l'Orient."

Richelieu's attention had again been directed to St Cyran by M. Le Maître's conversion, and he resolved to get rid of this "turbulent priest." Nothing was easier

in the France of those days than to remove an inconvenient person. A "lettre de cachet," an order to the Guard, and the troublesome person was arrested and confined in a prison—the Bois de Vincennes, or the Bastille—without a trial, and left there as long as it suited the convenience of those who sent him. M. de St Cyran had some idea of coming danger, but he went on his usual way until Ascension Day, 1638. On that day he said Mass as usual at Port Royal, and gave three addresses to his loved pupils, the Solitaires. He seems to have felt a special presentiment of danger, for he said to M. Le Maître: "To-day it is almost too bright, I cannot answer for to-morrow."

It is a pathetic picture, a few holy men gathered together for prayer and study, interrupted, persecuted, by the official representatives of the religion of the day. In the evening, reading as was his custom a portion of Holy Scripture, he came on Jeremiah xxvi. 14, "Ecce in manibus vestris sum, facite mihi quod bonum et rectum est in oculis vestris." "That is for me," said St Cyran. About two in the morning his house was surrounded by twenty-two guards. They saw that all was quiet, and waited until 6 A.M. Then came knockings and inquiries for M. de St Cyran, who was up and reading his beloved St Augustine; oddly enough, he had fallen on a passage concerning contrition. The "Chevalier du Guet" came in, was extremely civil, and asked or rather ordered M. de St Cyran to enter a carriage which stood outside. It so happened that M. d'Andilly was leaving Paris that day to go to his country estate, and seemingly by accident met St Cyran, to whom he had said a temporary farewell the day before. D'Andilly suspected nothing, for the guards had arranged themselves so as not to make it apparent that they were in charge of a State prisoner. He came up to the carriage and asked cheerfully where in the world St Cyran was taking all these people. "They are in charge of me, not I of them; but I feel I am in God's presence, not man's," replied St Cyran; "all the same," he went on, "they were in such a hurry, I had no time to pick up a book."

M. d'Andilly was reading St Augustine's Confessions, and hastily put the book into his friend's hands. Then he said: "You gave me this, now I give it you back." The friends embraced as friends do who possibly may not meet again, and St Cyran was conducted to the Bois de Vincennes.

At first St Cyran was harshly treated, but in a few days he was allowed the indulgence of a servant; poor Lancelot wished much that he could have been allowed to wait on his master. Those first days of imprisonment were sad enough. Like many another servant of God, St Cyran felt the horror of spiritual desolation, and he spent a sad, oppressed Whitsuntide. Light came to him, and as he said afterwards, the words of Psalm ix. were true of him—"Thou that liftest me up from the gates of death." Spiritual trials passed away, and the peace of God was granted in full measure.

He was kept for some time without any news of his friends, but every day someone went to the prison to ask for him: the faithful Lancelot tells us how overjoyed he was when the soldier whom he had asked for news of St Cyran gave him a message—"Tell him to pray for me, and to remember all I have told him." The gentle, enthusiastic Claude sent a message—"I would remember him all my life, would he always remember me in his prayers, and I would try to carry out in my life what he had taught me."

Then Lancelot went away, saying the Office of None and turning back to the prison with longing looks, repeating the verses, "Principes persecuti sunt me gratis" (Princes have persecuted me without a cause).

Richelieu in the meantime was desirous of getting some information as to his prisoner's state of mind, and hit on the somewhat odd plan of sending his niece, the Duchess D'Aiguillon, to see M. de Cyran, advising her to persuade d'Andilly to go with her. M. d'Andilly was held in great respect at Court, and it is said that when Richelieu and his creature Père Joseph, together with the Secretary of State, M. Sublet Des Noyers,

were deciding on St Cyran's arrest, one of the worthy trio said: "What will M. d'Andilly say?" Accordingly Madame D'Aiguillon, accompanied by the well-known Mme. de Rambouillet, met d'Andilly in the park at Vincennes, he being accompanied by his eldest son, afterwards the Abbé de Chaumes.

It is a queer little episode, a number of decidedly fashionable people paying a visit to a prisoner whose only crime was—that he took different and stricter views on the subject of penitence than did the powerful Minister. Of course that best and most loyal of friends, M. d'Andilly, put St Cyran's mind at rest about his papers and his friends. Naturally enough, nothing satisfactory for Richelieu was elicited; everyone was very polite, and St Cyran perfectly calm and resigned. His papers had been burned, or had been taken to the Chancellor, who was dismayed at the mass of manuscripts which it was his task to examine. He did examine some, and wrote to M. d'Andilly, that sure and safe receptacle for confidences, that he had found some meditations, which he had been reading, simply admirable. A good deal of MS. had been left behind, and St Cyran's nephew, M. de Barcos, with unnecessary caution, burnt much of it.

St Cyran's arrest made a great sensation, of which Richelieu was not unaware. Various people of repute pleaded vainly for St Cyran; among them M. Matthieu Molé, who perhaps is known to most people on account of his being forced into prominence in the evil days of the Fronde, when he was president of the Paris Parlement. M. Molé pressed Richelieu very hard, but with no effect. M. Molé had managed to get hold of a copy of St Cyran's *Admonitio ad Imperatorem*, a criticism of a virulent brochure entitled *Admonitio ad Regem*, attributed to a Jesuit. Peace had been concluded between France and the Empire before St Cyran had published his criticism, and he did not know that M. Molé had caused a copy to be made of the MS. which had been lent to him by the author. M. Molé now produced this work to prove how unfounded were the vague accusa-

tions of the prisoner's political crimes. In the early days of his imprisonment St Cyran was not able to write so much as he did later, but he found himself obliged to send a word to his dear spiritual son, M. Le Maître.

As the chronicler says, M. Le Maître wrote to M. St Cyran a letter expressing some of the sorrow he felt, to which St Cyran replied:

"Sir [how formal the "Monsieur" appears to our more expansive age!],—"I am more than glad at what you say, that your retirement was the cause of my imprisonment. If a hundred such opportunities were to be given to me, I could not do otherwise; and I am indeed grateful to God's grace for keeping me firm to the rule of faith, and making me shut my eyes to the past and future, for it would have been easy to foresee and avoid [what has happened] if I had had recourse only to human reason. If I had not responded to God in this, I should have been ruined beyond remedy. If this has really been the cause of my imprisonment, I am the most fortunate of men. If it pleased God to send me others who were as similarly disposed to believe me as you were, I should give them the same advice, or rather I should strengthen them in the same resolution, which, like you, they had already taken; and this with even more boldness, if I were certain I should be sent to the stake . . . I am surprised at nothing except this, that in the full light of the Church, separation from the world, which is one of the fundamental precepts of the Gospel, is held to be a misuse of the Gospel or an excess of devotion."

Jansensius, the author of that tremendously ponderous and, nowadays at least, little read volume, *Augustinus*, died in 1638. With his name the later Port Royalists are constantly identified. Around this book grew up that lengthy and much-to-be-lamented controversy with which one feels that the unfortunate inmates of the Abbey had nothing to do, and in which the rights and wrongs were not and cannot be equally divided. Jansensius may be in complete accordance with St Augustine, but St Augustine is not Holy Scripture, nor is he the voice of the universal Church, and in his

opposition to Pelagianism he took up a position which the undivided Church does not defend.

On the other hand, the Jesuits, as we shall presently see, are always inclined to push the dogma of Free Will to an extraordinary length. Truth, as usual, lies in the mean. The Grace of God is all-powerful, but God chooses to make our co-operation with His Grace a necessary part of our salvation. But, as has been well said—"No wise man attempts to find a precise solution for the eternal antinomy of Freedom and Necessity." It is enough to point out what the Alexandrians did. "In their recoil from Gnosticism the Alexandrians abolished Necessity and gave Freedom a new meaning."[1]

Jansenius himself does not come into our scheme, but it is impossible not to allude to his piety, his learning, his extraordinary erudition. Possibly the word which he is said to have uttered, "I would go to the end of the world with no book but St Augustine"[2] explains his limits, his failure to do more, the melancholy distinction which falls to his lot of being the posthumous founder of a school of thought or sect.

One Father, or one book is not and never will be the whole Catholic Religion: St John and St Paul are needed to supplement each other, and behind all is our Lord Himself.

Augustinus was printed in 1640. St Cyran, whose own literary style has none of the grace, distinction, and terseness which make the best French prose the delight of all cultivated readers, esteemed it very highly. Lancelot is fain to wish his beloved master had been able to revise it.

The Augustinus; or, the Doctrine of St Augustine on the Health, Sickness, and Medicine of the Soul, is divided into three volumes.

Vol. I. considers the doctrines of the Pelagians and of the Semi-Pelagians.

Vol. II. treats of the Truths of Christianity, and of

[1] Bigg, *Christian Platonists.*

[2] M. de Saci alluding to this, said, "*I* would go—with my Bible."

Grace, which are to be decided by Holy Scripture, the Councils, and the Fathers, and especially by St Augustine, the doctor who has made the doctrine of Grace his own.

Jansenius considers that these authorities must be followed, and he then dwells on the Fall.

Vol. III. The redemption of man and his restoration are considered, and also his gratuitous predestination (God's free gift).

Now those who follow St Augustine and those who take St Thomas Aquinas as their guide, agree that there is: (1) "efficacious" or prevenient grace, not dependent on the will of man, and (2) "sufficient" grace, to which man does not always yield.

Alas for human foresight. Who now reads *Augustinus?* Yet St Cyran thought it would last as long as the Church lasted, little dreaming that a certain boy of fifteen, one Blaise Pascal, was the chosen vessel—the immortal controversialist, still read, still enjoyed—who by some scattered thoughts and the brilliant *Lettres Provinciales* should keep Port Royal in remembrance.

About this time St Cyran's penitents, who were known as the "Solitaires," retired to Port Royal des Champs, the long-desired home of "les nôtres." M. Le Maître and his brother lived completely alone, but the others had their meals in common with the children whom they were educating—there were altogether some ten or twelve persons, and, as Lancelot says, they led a very happy life, with the simple purpose of pleasing God and serving Him.

Cardinal Richelieu, however, by no means wished to leave them in peace, and sent a certain official, Laubardement, who paid them two visits, and not content with questioning the Solitaires, cross-examined even the children. M. Le Maître rather enjoyed his cross-examination, in which he played on Laubardement with all his legal skill, and, as the chronicler remarks, the examiner was a child in Le Maître's hands. As might be expected, nothing was discovered, although Laubardement tried hard to find some

grounds for saying that St Cyran discouraged frequent Communion, for which Lancelot, the youngest of all the Solitaires, took him to task. There was a sort of rivalry at that time in the ecclesiastical world as to who could bring something forward against St Cyran's teaching. The Bishop of Langres wrote a Memoir on the subject. The Port Royalists were never slow to take up their pens in one another's defence, and M. Le Maître from his hermitage, and young Antoine Arnauld, his very youthful uncle, youngest of all Mère Angélique's brothers, rushed into the fray.

Another priest, the Abbé des Prières, distinguished himself by his animosity. Lancelot says of him that he was henceforth the centre of all the persecution, and in lamenting this, has a shrewd remark—"This," he says, "is the worst feature of spiritual sins. People do repent sometimes of gross sensual sin, but spiritual sins are hidden in the very depths of the heart."

The Solitaires were soon disturbed. An order came for them to leave Port Royal; they took refuge in divers places. M. Le Maître found it extremely difficult to get anyone to take so dangerous a person as the ex-avocat under his protection.

At last a certain M. Vitard,[1] who lived in a small town, Ferté-Milon, some forty miles from Paris, took them all in, and Lancelot charged himself with the education of M. Vitard's boys. The little Community, consisting of Lancelot, M. Le Maître and M. de Séricourt, with M. Singlin, who had replaced M. de St Cyran as confessor to the Solitaires, lived for a year in complete retreat and in perfect peace.

Lancelot seems hardly to have exchanged a word with either Le Maître or De Séricourt during this time. It is strange to think of this little Community, bound by no religious vows, living with the one purpose of serving God and working out their own salvation, in

[1] He married the poet Racine's great-aunt. Madame Vitard was the sister of the poet's grandmother, Mme. Racine. One of her daughters entered Port Royal, and was abbess 1690-99

the midst of the France of Louis XIII.—such a France as is described to us in many memoirs and in the novels of Dumas, and in De Vigny's beautiful story of *Cinq Mars*. Yet such people are found in all countries in every age. We had the Little Gidding household in England about this very time.

It is now time to say a few words on De Saci, the younger brother of Le Maître, and De Séricourt. Born in 1613, from his earliest years he was a boy of great promise and piety, with a turn for rhyming and a taste for literature. He wrote little *vers d'occasion* when he was quite a small boy, and M. Fontaine, the author of the delightful Memoirs of Port Royal which bear his name, gives us a poem written by young Isaac, to thank his mother for a purse she had given each of her sons. "Pure style de précieuses," remarks Sainte Beuve *à propos* of this effusion, which naturally enough pleased and astonished poor Catherine Le Maître. The precocious boy translated at her request a good many Latin hymns. De Saci from his childhood was devoted to the priesthood, and was very early in life St Cyran's spiritual child. He was always a pure, guileless soul, and never seems to have wavered in the path which was so clearly marked out for him. He was almost of the same age as Antoine Arnauld, his young uncle, and it seemed a natural proceeding for him to take his doctor's degree at the Sorbonne and be ordained priest. From this De Saci turned away, much to the surprise of his family; even his elder brother, "le grand pénitent," M. Le Maître, saw no objection to his Ordination. M. de St Cyran advised the youth to write to his brother and explain his reasons. The real cause of De Saci's hesitation was that he was not sure of his vocation to the priesthood, and if he took his doctor's degree he must be ordained priest.

De Saci got his way, but, as Fontaine says, "He feared to be a Doctor on account of the Priesthood; he became a Priest without becoming a Doctor."

De Saci joined the Solitaires and had a bad illness after the dispersion of 1638. After his recovery he

stayed for a while with M. de Barcos, studying and preparing himself for his future life-work. He was a born director, and his great distinction, his 'note,' so to speak, was his love for the Bible; his profound conviction that in reading and in meditation on Holy Scripture are to be found illumination and healing, as the author of the *Imitation* had said long before:

"For I find two things very particularly necessary for me in this life—food and light; without these two I could not live well, for the Word of God is the light of my soul, and Thy Sacrament the Bread of Life."[1]

His great work was the translation of the Bible; his whole life was one steady, unbroken devotion to God.

As Sainte Beuve says, there is but one fault ever to be discovered in De Saci, and that was really a fault of taste. He perpetrated a reply in verse to a stupid and unworthy *Almanack*, published by the Jesuits. De Saci would have done better had he not descended to the level of this almanack; but his verses, *Enluminures*, are only stupid and clumsy, according to our taste at least.

For the rest De Saci gave himself entirely to the things of God. A little cold, a little severe at first sight, yet in reality neither one nor the other, he and M. Singlin are the true and only real successors of St Cyran.

"Port Royal—le vrai Port Royal complet n'a en eu tout et pour tout que trois directeurs en chef, M. de Saint Cyran, M. Singlin, et M. de Saci," writes Sainte Beuve.

Returning to our dispersed Solitaires at Ferté-Milon; Lancelot tells us that Ferté-Milon not being a particularly healthy place, he fell ill, and that in his illness M. Le Maître was inexpressibly good to him, not only doing everything he could for Claude himself, but also doing his work and looking after his pupil.

[1] *Imitation of Christ*, Dr Bigg's translation, p. 170.

Père Joseph died at the end of 1638, and about a year afterwards M. Le Maître and M. de Séricourt went quietly back to Port Royal des Champs, where their late host, M. Vitard, joined them. M. Vitard seems to have charged himself with the mundane calls of the household. M. Le Maître and his brother felt it their duty to occupy themselves with a good deal of manual labour, and to take great care of the domains of Port Royal.

Lancelot was not with them at first at Port Royal des Champs. He went with M. de Barcos (St Cyran's nephew) to the Abbey of St Cyran for a year, and then returned to Paris, where the education of several boys was entrusted to him—a work very dear to St Cyran. He also took charge of the sacristy of Port Royal, and in Paris he spent about six years.

Port Royal de Paris was going on quietly and happily, but St Cyran's imprisonment was of course a great trouble and also a cause of some apprehension. Mère Angélique writes:

"26th June 1638.

"Things are just in the same state, only God can alter this. We have something to do with it, not only on account of the deep sense we have of what we owe to M. de St Cyran, but because we are ourselves looked on in such a way that if we were not what we are [*i.e.* so unworthy] we should go with him into prison. I do not know yet that nothing will happen."

A few days later she writes:

"Things are going from bad to worse, and we cannot say anything else, or what will be the end of it all. Apparently there is everything to fear, and you can do me no greater kindness than to pray to God that He will hear the prayers of the Blessed Mother and send His Holy Spirit on them to lead them in Truth and sustain them by Grace."

Mère Angélique wrote in the same strain to the Mère de Chantal, and warns her not to speak much nor to many people, of the correspondence between them,

"For, my Mother, you cannot really measure how I am regarded even in houses belonging to your Order."

As yet, however, no persecution fell on Port Royal. St Cyran from his prison continued to direct various people, notably the Princess de Guemenée, Anne de Rohan, widow of Louis de Rohan, Prince de Guemenée. M. d'Andilly, who loved souls, and especially souls which were contained in beautiful bodies, had brought her into touch with M. de St Cyran.

M. Guillebert, a priest and a Professor in the Sorbonne, and M. de Reboures, a priest who was to become one of the confessors of Port Royal, came under St Cyran's direction.

M. de St Cyran was kept in a tolerably rigorous confinement. He was ill several times, and the wife of one of the officers of the prison did her best, for some reason or another, to make him as uncomfortable as possible. In return, St Cyran induced the nuns of Port Royal to receive her sister-in-law among them, and also taught for a while her little boys.

A year passed away before any examination of the prisoner took place. M. de St Cyran refused in calm and dignified terms to be questioned by Laubardement, who had examined the "Solitaires," as he was in no wise an ecclesiastic. Richelieu at last sent his own confessor, one Jacques Lescot, a Professor of the Sorbonne, who had been some years earlier acquainted with Antoine Arnauld. Lancelot observes that Lescot had not taught his penitent to forgive, and had learned from that penitent to revenge! Lancelot tells us in his Memoir that St Cyran's great wish was to follow our Blessed Lord's Example, and especially the Example of His Humility.

Lescot was not, as one might expect, a priest who could in the least appreciate this temper of mind. He was not particularly clever, and his reading had been limited to scholastic learning; of the Fathers he was practically ignorant.

Nothing came of this examination. Lescot hinted to St Cyran that his liberation from prison really depended on his opinions on contrition. M. de St Cyran asked for permission to go home for a few months and write a book on the subject, but, as was to be expected, Richelieu was not favourable to this project.

"One must not be too much troubled," said St Cyran, "let God act. He is too merciful to us; if He lets us work our work of penitence in prison, all human means for delivering me are futile—He only, as I have said, can deliver me from my judge, whether it be to go to Paris or—to Paradise."

Lescot paid St Cyran another visit a year later, and there were several attempts to make him write or say something which might pass for a recantation. St Cyran did not falter or seem to falter for a moment. M. d'Andilly, M. de Liancourt, and especially M. de Chavigny, all besought him to write a letter. This last was a nephew of that Bishop of Aire, who, as we have seen, was a dear friend of St Cyran. Chavigny did all he could for St Cyran. He was the governor of Vincennes and a favourite of Richelieu. It was settled that St Cyran should write a letter to M. de Chavigny on the subject of contrition, and that Chavigny should show this letter to the Cardinal. To this, after some hesitation, St Cyran assented.

He set forth his belief that two opinions were allowable: one, that contrition was absolutely necessary, the other, that attrition was enough.

This letter is not clear, but naturally enough, St Cyran was struggling to express himself moderately; he quickly repented of this small attempt, and writes in a very few days to M. d'Andilly that he is vexed for not having spoken more strongly.

As he predicted, the letter had no effect on Richelieu, and he paid no attention to the words of so great a person as M. le Prince de Condé, who spoke to him of St Cyran.

"He is a dangerous person," said the Cardinal,

"more dangerous than six armies. Do you see my Catechism, which is in the twenty-second edition? *I* say in it that attrition is enough, and he ventures to say that contrition is necessary. Added to which, he was opposed to me in that affair of Monsieur's marriage, when every other person in France was on my side."

This significant little conversation was repeated by Louis de Bourbon, afterwards the great Condé (the brother of Madame de Longueville), to M. d'Andilly, who duly carried it to M. de St Cyran on one of his few visits. For St Cyran saw few friends, he resigned himself to his prison, but, as we have seen, his life was full of fruits.

He was kind to his fellow-prisoners; Lancelot tells us of various little instances of remarkably thoughtful kindnesses. A certain Baronne de Beau-Soleil (whom Lancelot identifies with a person who had been noted as one who found water with divining-rods) was shut up at Vincennes, and St Cyran saw that she and her daughter (who was with her) were badly provided with clothes. He wrote at once to Madame Le Maître and commissioned her to get what was wanted and to send such things as were suitable for gentlewomen, even remembering that ladies frequently wore black lace. This is only a specimen. He really was a father to all the poor people at Vincennes, and was particularly kind to the under-governor of Vincennes and his wife, who had been as malicious and spiteful as she well could be. St Cyran interceded on her husband's behalf with M. de Chavigny.

The days were passed in strict devotion, in writing, in acts of kindness. It is pleasant to notice how fond St Cyran was of children.

To this period belong these letters of St Cyran.

St Cyran to M. Guillebert.

Speaking of the Priesthood, he writes:

"We must surrender ourselves to God once and for all, and enter upon that narrow way, out of which there

is no salvation, and then let ourselves be drawn by the Spirit of God and by the rules of His truth."

Speaking of scholastic theology, he says :—

"For although it may be true that it [scholastic theology] has originated in part from the necessity in which the Church found herself obliged to reduce her teaching into formulæ in order to destroy the subtilty of heretics, yet it has contributed a good deal to the pride of intellect in learned Catholics."

St Cyran's views of the awful character of the priest's Office were very deep and very austere. He says many striking words on the need of vocation, of the dreadful nature of the sins which lead priests astray ; he even says :—

"Now, if the words of the Gospel are considered, it will be easy to believe that the sins of priests are of the same nature as those of fallen angels, and consequently the result in most evil priests is to bring their souls into an inconvertible state."

He goes on then to speak of post-Baptismal sin (alas, too lightly regarded by us all), and says :—

"The whole of the faithful enter, through Baptism, into the participation of the Priesthood of Jesus Christ. That is why St Peter calls the whole of the faithful the Royal Priesthood, the holy People, and St John says all Christians are Priests. In consequence of this, when Christians fall into mortal sin, they make themselves guilty of a horrible profanation of the Priesthood of Jesus Christ in their own persons. And so, in greater degree, the crimes of Priests are enormously heavy."

St Cyran dwells much on the strictness of the Gospel. He goes on to dwell on the sign of a true vocation, which seems to him to be chiefly innocence or penitence :—

"I do not know if you will forgive me for a thought which has come into my mind, and if you will be as simple in listening to it as I aspire to be in telling it. It

seems to me that Jesus Christ during the three years of His Ministry called no one to the Apostolate and to the Ministry who was learned in the Law; even Nathaniel and Nicodemus were excluded. He called only fishers and simple and ignorant men. So also in these latter days, which the Apostles would call with more reason than then 'the last time,' since Theology has become so detailed and so far removed from the simplicity and obedience to God's Spirit which is needful to faith . . . it seems to me, I repeat, that the greater number of those who are called to the Priesthood might be simple and ignorant, to whom God gives His light and reveals His mysteries, as the Gospel for St Matthias Day says."

Of course this is only one aspect, and the Church of God is never wholly effectual when her priests are wholly unlearned. The sad fact is that learning and poverty are so often incompatible. If St Cyran had lived now, he would probably have denounced the idea prevalent among us, that the Ministry can only be exercised by people belonging to the well-to-do classes.

St Cyran goes on in another letter to lament the ignorance which prevailed concerning Holy Orders, Penance, the Eucharist.

In another letter he speaks of the joy he felt when he read these words which have brought peace to many souls: "Si quis voluerit voluntatem ejus facere, cognoscet de doctrina," etc. "It is seen here so clearly that the way to know the truth of God is to do His will. And what more direct way of doing God's will is there than to renounce one's possessions, worldly and spiritual?" Two qualities St Cyran desired to see in a priest who was also a penitent:—

"The one is steadfastness, which is more than good sense, and which can aid him much with the help of Grace to fight against the remains of sins. The other is an entire exemption from covetousness, as much in respect of happiness as in respect of men and of praise . . . every day and hour of the life of such a penitent ought to be accompanied by offerings, sacrifices, and thanksgiving, presented to God for such a blessed

return, which is the effect of a grace much more rare in this age than is suspected.

"If ever the command that Jesus Christ made to His Disciples to pray the Lord of the harvest to send labourers into His harvest, that is to say, Priests with a true and heavenly vocation given by God, not merely an exterior call; if ever this should be obeyed, it is now, when souls are languishing and dying of hunger for lack of Bread, when there are no true Pastors who are able to break and distribute it to them."

M. Guillebert was much exercised as to his future life. St Cyran says:—

"It is a matter of the greatest importance that before the beginning anything great or small, we should pray to God with great earnestness. God has only troubled the surface of your well, I mean your heart, in order to heal you by the Angel of Counsel from all natural infirmities, which are common to all; He has drawn you by love to the one truth, by which, as the Gospel tells us, God heals and frees the soul from all remaining faults and from the slavery of sin."

Letter after letter follows; always the same stern austerity, the fear of the Lord, yet with indications of not exactly tenderness, perhaps, but of burning love, restrained, kept under, but always at white heat. He points out in one letter, how the degradation in Church life resembled the Jewish apostasy. He longs, he says, to weep over men who are really losing their souls in full security. "What is, then, the way by which we can avoid illusions, and tread in the path of God, the narrow way of the Gospel, in which Jesus Christ precedes us? It is this—follow the Truth of the Gospel, and follow after it in the sense that all the great saints, the great pastors of the Church, have taught."

The following extracts will give some idea of his teaching. The stern side of our Lord's teaching is brought before the priest as he says:—

"When I consider the pastoral charge from this point of view, which is the point of view of the Gospel, I can only say to you that you will never attain that

Grace, which you need to strengthen and nourish you in the truths which God has taught Christians and stored up in the Gospel and in the traditions of the Church, if you do not do what Jesus Christ and His Apostles have done, that is, surrender all things, surrender yourself.

"This word would be terrifying to us if Jesus Christ had not expressly laid all Christians under the obligation to obey this law; so it is not a counsel, but a strict command.

"We have only to read and understand St Luke xiv., where the Son of God says so solemnly that no one ought to undertake to unite himself to Christ's Church if he does not leave all without exception. . . . There is nothing so indispensable for a Pastor as this, the surrendering of all; and although I agree that all are not called to renounce the actual possession of worldly goods as are the 'religious' who consecrate themselves to God, it does seem to me that at this epoch, when the Clergy have become so secular, and so fond of money, that they are a public scandal to everyone, a Pastor should be specially marked out by the virtue of detachment from temporal things."

St Cyran in another letter points out how the grace given in ordination may lead a Priest and Pastor to a veritable martyrdom. He goes on to say:—

"It is really simply nothing, or nearly nothing, to kindle love in the soul of a sinner if no care is taken to keep it alive and to supply it as it were with fresh fuel continually and unfailingly."

How many parochial Missions have seemed to bring little result for lack of attention to this apparently obvious truth!

Finally, St Cyran advises M. Guillebert to go forward in the discharge of his sacred office. He uses these memorable words:—

"You will have no difficulty in understanding this Way [the Way of God] and in distinguishing it from all others which feign to be the Way. They come in the beginning always from him who can change himself into an angel of light—although he hides the deceitfulness of his light, as well as the reality of his darkness.

"For although the Heavenly Way may be narrow, it grows wider in proportion as one treads it, and although the truth which grace imparts may not be easy to see, it becomes luminous in proportion as it is perceived, and in proportion as love is practised. . . .

"God alone will be sufficient to guide you in all circumstances, and to light you in all difficulties which you encounter in your office."

What follows shows how completely a Catholic who believes in the "Ministry of Reconciliation" can yet assert the necessity of dependence on God alone ultimately and for every (so to speak) final need of the soul:—

"We must struggle after this Christian freedom, which liberates us from all bondage, even bondage to men who serve God, for they often stay us and deceive us if they are not like-minded with us and are not labouring for the same end, by the same means."

These few extracts give some idea of the absolute self-surrender which St Cyran taught. The truths he preaches may seem obvious enough, but experience teaches that it is just the simple, elementary, obvious truths of duty and of faith which are often, nay generally, the easiest to overlook.

Writing to M. de Rebours, who became one of the Port Royal confessors, M. de St Cyran advises him not to read more than one chapter of Arnauld's book[1] daily, and to read more Holy Scripture. "There is nothing at all like it: everything else is nothing in comparison."

There is a tender little touch in one of this set of letters. St Cyran is half apologising for having sent some children to Port Royal, and writes:—

"But the truth is that I did not foresee it would be for such a long time, and my original plan was to relieve them [the 'Solitaires'] as soon as I was set at liberty.

"For it seems to me I can bear the naughtiness of children fairly well, and I think I might do a good deal for them, even if I did not get them on much in Latin until they were twelve or so, provided I could get them

[1] *De la Fréquente Communion.*

in their early childhood into the neighbourhood of a house or a monastery in the country, allowing them the games of their age, and only letting them see the example of a good life in those who would live with me."

Sometimes M. de Rebours seems to have been distressed by St Cyran's letters, and St Cyran tried to comfort him. He writes :—

"There are breathings of the Holy Spirit, Who is the Wind of Heaven, which are not felt, which make us act; this is always true of souls separated from the world and consecrated to God, of whom I have spoken below."

St Cyran had a great dislike of over-much religious talk. He says in another letter :—

"Words of piety, whatever they may be, are in the Church as among the leaves not among the fruits. They are called *cymbalum tinniens* (tinkling cymbal)."

Continually he exhorts his sons in the faith to perseverance :—

"There is nothing so easy as speaking a worldly language and what comes naturally to us. If after a total surrender we do not perpetually watch and pray God to be also watchful over us, we shall fall back on ourselves."

He shared to the full the fear of unworthy Communions which Antoine Arnauld expressed in *La Fréquente Communion.* "The Holy Communion only hurts souls which are not in the least converted to God." He is extremely anxious that no one should come to it carelessly, unprepared. Speaking of the religious education of girls, he writes :—

"If they are innocent and good, but living in indifference, I should tell them gently about the love of God and of watchfulness over themselves and their natural inclinations: and if they really showed that they were trying in some degree although not in everything, I should receive them from time to time to

Communion. When they do not wish to fall into venial sin, and only yield to it through weakness and are sorry for it, all that is very pardonable," he says with a tenderness which, though seldom expressed, was very real.

St Cyran writes of M. d'Andilly from his prison :—

"It is really true that there are very few people who are like him either in intelligence or goodness."

Speaking of his imprisonment, he says, in a letter to M. Arnauld :—

"I am in prison for upholding penitence."

Before leaving the subject of the Priestly Life, I will quote a few of the "Pensées sur la Sacerdoce," from *Lettres de M. de St Cyran.*

"God has pointed out nothing more clearly in the books of the Old and New Testament than the indispensable necessity of Divine election and vocation for the sacred Ministry, alike for the Synagogue and the Church.

"We may be the most upright of men, but we cannot be Priests except by a vocation from God, sent it may be as a reward for a holy life."

(Probably this sentence will jar on most of us, but one is sure from the context that St Cyran meant that in proportion as men correspond to grace, God calls them to greater exertion, to nobler vocations.)

"A very special vocation is needful for those who are called to endure martyrdom. As St Cyprian says, certainly it is equally needful for the Priesthood, since one of the essential conditions for a Pastor and a Priest is to be always ready to suffer death for the least of his flock, whether it be in times of peace or of war.

"If a Bishop and a Priest really discharge their offices, how much suffering they must bear in this world! If they do not, what suffering will be theirs in the next!

"If it is difficult to restore a Christian who has fallen away from Baptismal grace, it is incomparably more difficult to restore a Priest who has fallen from his Priesthood."

There is much in St Cyran's notes on the Priesthood which jars on one—a rigour, an insistence on the terrors of the Lord. But it is right to remember the low estate of religion up to this time of revival.

Not he only, but many another had tried to revive the true Priestly spirit, the real sense of vocation, and if St Cyran seems unduly harsh, one must remember that it was not without cause.[1]

One saying of St Cyran recalls Mère Angélique's first conversion :—

"There are some elect souls, whom God reserves, who are converted by the preaching of bad Clergy without real vocation. God makes use of everything for His elect, even of the greatest sinners just as much as of other people. Even their sins are sometimes the means of converting souls."

There are some letters of M. de St Cyran to his little niece and godchild, who was being brought up at Port Royal, which show his tender side. They are written from his prison.

"My very dear Niece and God-Daughter,

"Ever since I have been put by the King in a fine Castle, I have always prayed for him, and also for you, that God would give you grace to be wholly His and to serve Him from your childhood.

"The greatest joy I have felt for two years is to have heard that you are in the holy house which I so much love [Port Royal], and that the Reverend Mother has written to me about you—that you are resolved to be Jesus Christ's little servant, and to love no one but Him on earth."

He then goes on to give her various bits of good advice :—

"Never to excuse oneself, never to accuse anyone, never to pity oneself or compare oneself with other

[1] La vocation chrétienne était rare dans le haut Clergé. Pour les fils de grandes familles Dieu fut un pis aller ; on servait Dieu quand on ne pouvait, soit à cause du rang de naissance, soit à cause d'une infirmité, servir le Roi."—Lavisse, *Histoire de France*.

people, never to put oneself first, to bear patiently and gently with those who do all these things; this, my dear little Niece and Godchild, is the short cut to be good and virtuous, and well-pleasing to our Lord, to whom I commend you every day.

"I am expecting the little St John, my patron Saint, which you wish to send me. I will put him with the image of Jesus Christ, with the Crown of Thorns and other pretty images of Saints, which are all for you and which I will myself bring to Port Royal when I get out of this Castle. Love me as I love you, for the love of Jesus Christ, who died for us."

St Cyran shared the usual belief of his age and of his Communion, that it was almost impossible to save one's soul in the world, and tells his little niece as much. But he was very tender to her, and by no means inclined to be over severe in speaking of childish faults. He tells her whenever she committed some small sin to say simply, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us."

He sends many messages to the various children, one of them to a daughter of M. d'Andilly:—

"I should have liked so much to keep your cat; he was so handsome; but my room is so small, that there is not space for us two. Keep him for me until I ask you for him."

It is rather melancholy to read the later letters, in which St Cyran speaks to the child of the duty of resisting her parents. Probably it was true enough that they would not have brought her up exactly as he desired, but it is the great failure of his teaching—the lack of all sympathy with the common duties, common griefs, common joys of life.

Each age of the Church has its own dangers, its own ideals, and it is no wonder that there has been a reaction against the notion of the life of "Religion"—to use the word in its technical sense—when life in the world was regarded as almost incompatible with life in the Church. It is one of the great problems of our own day, one of the calls to our Ecclesia Anglicana, to

recognise the many vocations to which her children may be called.

St Cyran's little niece died in 1641, and he poured out his heart in a letter to Mère Angélique. Evidently he had cared very much for the little girl whom he had so seldom seen, the child of a brother much younger than himself, to whom he had given up an estate and with whom, alas, he had had a lawsuit, a fact which had greatly distressed the child. Her withdrawal from Port Royal did not, probably, imply a return to her home, but the entrance into some other religious house, the conditions of which St Cyran deemed unfavourable to his godchild's spiritual life.

He wrote afterwards to a lady of high degree, probably the Princess de Guémenée :—

"Only I can know the mercy God has granted me in calling my little niece to Himself; as St John says, there are gifts of God known only to him who receives them. . . . It is true that, as far as God made me able to love, I loved the little one, for several reasons, and because of the tenderness God had given us both for each other."

A few more extracts, from his letters, are here given.

To a Nun who had become blind.

"When extraordinary ills overtake people such as you are, one must believe they are occasions of wealth. For faith always is what it does not seem to be in the faithful. There is no greater affliction than blindness, according to the utterances, passions, and reason of mankind. And there is nothing so sanctifying, if we raise ourselves to God and to His eternal plans. . . .

"Every temporal possession seems to be included in sunlight, for without it one enjoys nothing. And, on the contrary, all celestial possessions of grace are enclosed in this darkness, for a true Christian, who bears it with patience, and thence makes his soul purer and more full of light.

"The highest perfection lies in recognising every event, good or bad, as effects of the will of God. He is so kind, and He accommodates Himself so much to

our weakness, that He only sends us trials one after the other so as to help us to bear great ones by the smaller ones."

Writing to a friend who had lost his only daughter, St Cyran says :—

"As the advice of one in sorrow is often listened to by a comrade in affliction, I counsel you to do with your trial (which is more unique than mine) what God has given me grace to do with mine,[1] which is to look on it as a part of the Passion of the Son of God. He does not say by His Prophets that He has been alone in His Passion, but that His Passion has been by itself. God sometimes sends us unique sorrows.

"Every sorrow sent to us in this world resembles, in some measure, the Passion of Christ; but nothing resembles it so much as the penances imposed from time to time on those whom He calls His Children, whom He loves with the same love with which He loved His Son. We must take heed not to seem bastards in our affliction, as this very affliction according to the Apostle is a proof that we are not bastards but sons."

As Lancelot says, the whole population of Vincennes regarded St Cyran as a saint, an opinion shared by his confessor, who belonged to an Order of Canons which had been established by Henri II. at Vincennes. He frequently sent young religious to talk to St Cyran.

There was also in Vincennes at the time of St Cyran, a certain General de Wert, who had been taken prisoner of war. Richelieu had this gentleman invited to a great spectacular comedy, "Mirame," which contained allusions to Anne of Austria's supposed affection for the late Duke of Buckingham, suggested probably by Richelieu with malignant spite.[2]

Various bishops were present; a future Archbishop of Sens, a disgrace to his order, had acted as a sort of director or master of the ceremonies. De Wert was

[1] *I.e.*, his imprisonment.

[2] Sainte Beuve's note is too good to omit :—"Richelieu narguant la Reine à Mirame, c'est l'exact vis à vis de Saint Cyran en oraison à Vincennes."

asked what he thought. The General, who was on the eve of departure and had no special reason for truckling to Richelieu, replied that everything was very wonderful; one thing in particular excited his surprise. What was this? everyone asked. "It is this," said he, "that in the Very Christian Kingdom of France, Bishops are to be seen at the Play (and such a play!); Saints are to be seen in prison." Of course Richelieu was told of this *mot*, but he took no notice. Another friend whom M. de St Cyran made at Vincennes was a German officer, the Baron d'Ekenfort. He was to be exchanged for a M. de Feuquières, whose wife was the sister of the M. Arnauld who had so lately escaped from Philisbourg with M. de Séricourt. D'Ekenfort had been released and had gone to the kind and hospitable M. d'Andilly, when to his horror the two young sons of M. de Feuquières appeared with the news that their father was dead.

He had to return to Vincennes, and then he found in St Cyran a true friend. He never forgot St Cyran, to whom he seems to have owed a real conversion. Lancelot, quoting St Jerome, says, "St Cyran converted his prison into a Christian home."

About this time Catherine Le Maître became a widow; she had been separated from her husband for twenty-five years, and ever since the removal of the Port Royal nuns to Paris had spent much of her time with Angélique and Agnès. She had come under St Cyran's influence, and for some time before her husband's death she wore the dress of a postulant. Mme. Le Maître seems to have been a true Arnauld, generous, kind, devout, ready as were her brothers and sisters to come to the aid of their dear Angélique. She was evidently a person of consideration; she was placed in charge of the Mlle. de Longueville, who was the stepdaughter of the great Condé's sister, the second wife of the Duc de Longueville.

Mlle. de Longueville[1] was not a very amiable

[1] She became Duchesse de Nemours. Her Memoirs are well known.

person, and did much to increase the unhappiness of her stepmother's life. Her own mother had known Mère Angélique ever since the Maubuisson days.

In 1640 Catherine became a novice. There were now at Port Royal, Angélique, Agnès, Catherine Le Maître, Marie Claire, Anne, Madeleine, and their mother.

Mme. Arnauld had been a nun at Port Royal since 1629, and had lived a life of extreme piety and austerity. In 1636 she lost her son Simon, who was killed in battle, and for him she mourned, it is said, with thankfulness that he had not fallen in a duel.

Her youngest son, Antoine, who was to become the most famous of the Arnaulds, had also just before her death become a convert. Sainte Beuve observes (*Port Royal*, vol. ii., p. 12): "On appelle conversion à Port Royal . . . ce qui semblerait un surcroît presque sans motif dans un christianisme moins interieur."

Probably no Port Royalist would agree as to the absence of motive, and many Christians have known what it is to pass from intellectual agreement and a life of discipline to the living, inward apprehension of what self-surrender to Christ means.

This is what happened to young Antoine Arnauld, of whom we must speak later. His conversion was that final blessing which no doubt made his mother say her Nunc Dimittis. Early in 1641 Mme. Arnauld died, leaving a message to her "Benjamin," exhorting him never to cease to defend the truth.

It seems a long time since that Journée du Guichet, when the still young mother took a rash vow never to cross the threshold of Port Royal, and poor Angélique fell fainting before her enraged parents. Mme. Arnauld was only eighteen years older than the daughter who became her mother in religion, and whom St Catherine de Sainte Félicité (as Mme. Arnauld was known in religion) treated with the deepest reverence and respect. A striking contrast to some devout and excellent ladies, who can never believe their daughters of forty and upwards to be grown up and sensible women.

Mère Angélique with her five sisters knelt round their dying mother as M. Singlin said the last prayers, and heard her murmur, "Draw me to Thee, O God," or, "How amiable are Thy tabernacles," until at last she quietly gave up her soul to God.

Certainly Mme. Arnauld, the youthful bride of Antoine Arnauld, the mother of his twenty children, must have been a remarkable woman. She had a full share of the generosity and devotion which characterised the Arnaulds, and, like her daughter Angélique, possessed a capacity for growth in holiness. She had been a friend to St Cyran, who frankly owns in a letter to her eldest son M. d'Andilly that he had wept for Mme. Arnauld. He added what was the keynote of Port Royal, at least in his time: "She (Mme. Arnauld) always believed that it is not an easy thing to be saved."

Her grandson, M. de Saci, wrote a letter to M. Le Maître which shows the reverence her descendants had for her, and which breathes the lofty atmosphere of the Arnauld family; "plain living and high thinking" had certainly come to be their way of life.

Antoine Arnauld, of whom we must now speak, had gone through the usual University studies and had begun the study of law in company with his nephew, M. Le Maître, who was about five years his senior, and whose retirement no doubt had a great effect on young Antoine. Influenced by his devout mother, he turned from law to theology under the very same professor (Lescot) who examined St Cyran at Vincennes. Antoine was the most brilliant of his brilliant family, and his career during his studies in theology was marked by a succession of achievements. Everything seemed to point to a prosperous career.

But the same voice was calling him which had called his uncle a few months ago, the same doubts, the same sense of "vanitas vanitatum," the same longing for the Eternal. St Cyran was already in prison. Antoine sent him a letter through his brother, M. d'Andilly.

"*Dec.* 24, 1638.

"MON PÈRE,

"May I call you by this name, since God gives me the wish to be your son? I see indeed in His sight how unworthy I have made myself to be this, and that your charity so often held out arms to receive me. I deserve indeed by a just judgment to be deprived now of a help which I did not seek, as I ought to have done, when it was fully offered me. It was not, thank God, from lack of reverence for truths which it has pleased the Divine Goodness to teach me through you: but one of these truths is that the light which we have only serves to condemn us, if it meets with no correspondence and does not produce in us the fruits of the Spirit. I am compelled to reproach myself, so that I may not be condemned by Jesus Christ one day in the presence of His Angels, that I have held for so long the truth in unrighteousness. I have done nothing which I was told to do, and I was satisfied to have the thoughts of a child of God and to do the works of a child of the world. I have been for so many years in a perpetual lethargy, seeing what was right and not doing it, and I know by my own experience the truth of this word of the Holy Spirit: *Fascinatio nugacitatis obscurat bona.*

"At last, my Father, for about three weeks, God has spoken to my heart and has given me at the same time ears to hear Him. He gave me one of His servants to direct me in His ways: M. le Feron: but he sees now, and so do I, that everything was hurried too much in his direction of me, that more time was needed in this very serious matter. But he has decided that provided I really mean to supplement later what was done rather too quickly, the press of occupations would be an excuse for his mistake. I want to explain this to you privately; but it is impossible to do so in a letter. I am only sorry that either I must give up my Licentiate, or take the Sub-Diaconate; I have already got my degree againt rules, since I ought to have been in Orders to do so. I know full well that this necessity, if it had been my only motive, would have been a poor excuse in God's sight for approaching His altar: but M. le Feron thinks that as God in His infinite mercy has given me some inclination for this calling, so this reason, which certainly was not enough by itself for

taking Orders, was an additional reason. I took them then by his advice, after a fortnight's retreat, which I knew too well was nothing in preparation for such a step. I beg you for the sake of God not to forsake me in the great need I have of advice. God has given me in His great goodness the wish to do everything He shall ask of me. That is why I beg you, my Father, to direct me as one who is ready unreservedly to follow God's voice wherever it shall call me. If you decide that it is His will that I should retire into solitude and weep over my sins, I am ready to leave all. If you believe He does not will that I should serve His altar, I will never approach it, and I will ask His forgiveness all my life for having undertaken an office which I was unworthy to exercise. Ah, my Father, if only Divine Providence had willed that I should open my heart in your presence, and I could have had from your mouth the teaching I needed for my salvation! But so long as God permits I will be the son of your bonds. M. le Feron has proposed to take me into his house during Lent, so that I may give myself up to study and prayer, far from the perplexity of the business and news of the world. It is time, my Father, to end, and I beg you for the sake of the Blood of Christ, and because of St Paul's words, *Infirmum autem in fide suscipite*, not to refuse me that advice which a sinner begs for his soul's salvation."

St Cyran's heart must have leaped up with joy when this Christmas greeting reached him in his dreary prison. He writes with that sternness which just does not hinder his tenderness: "You are indeed blessed to have reached the point you have reached, and I am blessed no less if God has made use of me to lead you on in the path into which He has brought you. You are the master of my life, now that you are God's servant. The dignity of the Doctor's degree has led you away as beauty led away the two old men in the History of Susanna." (Sainte Beuve quotes a saying, "Each of us has his Venus.")

But St Cyran did not require from his new disciple that retirement which he had exacted from, or at any rate sanctioned in Le Maître and De Saci. He advised

him to go on to the end of his studies—only in a different spirit and with the help of a disciplined life—prayer, fasting, reading of the Holy Scriptures, almsgiving. Up to this time Antoine had been a learned, but also a somewhat worldly young Bachelor of Arts, enjoying life, and, as we should say, a well-set-up young man. Now he was to change all this. It appears that he gave his share of his paternal inheritance to Port Royal. The "Solitaires" of Port Royal did give their goods to Port Royal, but how they managed their financial affairs was concealed, and with good reason.[1]

Antoine was ordained Priest, and received his Doctor's degree, taking the oath which he tried so hard to keep, of which his mother on her deathbed had reminded him—"to defend the truth"—"usque ad effusionem sanguinis."

Mme. le Maître wrote to Antoine as follows :—

"I see in you," she says, "almost a new brother, bound to me by a bond as close as that which unites me to my children, and they can only think of you as of a brother. Ah, if you only knew how these hermits, 'the Solitaires,' besought God for you, and how dear you already are to them, you would love them more than [we do]."

On All Saints' Day, 1641, Antoine said his first Mass, after a month's Retreat.

At Port Royal itself there had been sickness and death. Marie Claire died in June 1642, and Mother Agnès, the Abbess, nearly followed her. So great was the danger, that Extreme Unction was administered to Agnès on the very day of Marie Claire's funeral.

Mère Angélique wrote to her youngest brother, Antoine, a day or two before Marie Claire's death :—

"Our poor Marie Claire is ever growing worse, and I do not think, dear brother, that she will last more than two days. This is a very real loss to us, but it is an offering we owe to God, and we must try to make it a willing sacrifice, so that He may be pleased. She is in peace, and in that joy which the grace of God alone can give in the midst of the bitterness of death."

[1] See Sainte Beuve, *Port Royal*, vol ii., p. 15.

Agnès had now been Abbess for six years, and Angélique, who, twelve years before, had resigned her office, was re-elected, much against her will. Since the arrest of St Cyran, M. Singlin had directed the Port Royalists, and Angélique in obedience to his advice yielded and submitted to the wishes of the Port Royalists.

At the end of 1642, when Richelieu was very ill, Agnès writes as follows to a young nun at Port Royal (apparently both were at Port Royal, but Agnès wrote to reprove the novice, and seems to have preferred to scold her gently though severely by letter):—

"I beg you to pray God thrice daily for the Cardinal that he may be changed; pray with a real wish that God may give you Christian feelings for him." It is touching to see the eagerness with which Agnès took the lower place after her resignation.

1642 had been a busy year in Richelieu's life. It had seen his final triumph and the dismal downfall of Cinq Mars, of De Thou, and the exile of Gaston, Duc D'Orleans. Marie de' Medicis was in exile and loneliness at Cologne; Louis XIII. was absolutely Richelieu's tool, ready to obey his will, and indeed forced to see that the great Minister was indispensable. France was successful abroad, and the end of the miserable Thirty Years' War was at hand.

And Richelieu and his King were alike near to death.

The Cardinal faced his doom with lofty calmness and absolute fearlessness. "Dieu sait le secret de la confiance avec laquelle cet homme qui avait été si peu misericordieux, attendait la misericorde de son souverain juge," says the historian Henri Martin, and it is not necessary for us to examine the verdicts which history has pronounced on his work. He has never been a popular hero, and the people have judged rightly. To quote Dean Kitchin, "we shall condemn the strong man armed who gave no thought to his oppressed and labouring countrymen, and made constitutional life impossible for France."

Richelieu was utterly unaffected by moral ideals; hence his inability to understand St Cyran. He is of the line of statesmen who have shaped their own and their country's policy with no other view or motive than that of pure selfishness.

He believed that though a man, a single individual, might conceivably order his conduct on Christian and moral principles, a nation could not.

This marks the great difference between the wars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and those of the centuries preceding them. At least, those earlier wars were often fought out for ideas, and, however short the performance might fall, were ennobled by loftiness of ideal.

And Port Royal and its struggles typify unworldliness; spirituality struggling against all that made up worldliness, low aims, slackness. The seventeenth century was a religious century, but Richelieu paved the way for the absolute rule of Louis XIV. and all that that rule implied—official religion, no inconvenient zeal, disregard of the poor and needy, vainglory and pomp. For the last time France had the offer of spiritual awakening, and again the offer was rejected. When it came again, it was not proffered by those who spoke the Christian language or presented the Christian ideals.

Richelieu died on December 4, 1642.

M. de St Cyran received the news, noticed that it was St Cyran's Day, and then, taking his breviary, said the Vespers of the Dead. He writes to the Princesse de Guémenée:—

"What has become of him who indeed as long as he lived made Europe tremble, as he himself said before he died? I cannot resist telling you that his death was as surprising as his life, and that if the first supplied to the clever ones of the earth ample materials for history, the latter gave no less occasion for thought to spiritual men. As human senses are accustomed to certain objects which do not concern them although they concern others, so the minds of those who live apart from the world grow inured to events which disquiet others. I do not

know to which I belong; but I am speaking the truth when I say that this death has left me just as I was before; I only felt a certain compassion."

Various friends hurried to see the prisoner when release seemed at hand, and amongst these his dear Claude Lancelot, who took with him, he tells us, some of the children he was educating. Claude tells us how on entering St Cyran's room he felt as if he were entering the cell of a martyr, and how St Cyran blessed the children, crossing their hands and saying: "I am not a Bishop, but still I am a Priest of Jesus Christ." Then they walked in the garden, praying in the chapel as they went and returned. Antoine Arnauld came in also, eager, with all the controversial zeal which was his great characteristic, about a certain M. le Moine who had at Richelieu's request attacked Jansenius.

Lancelot goes on to say that he never could forget his visit, and lamented that St Cyran had had no one near him in his imprisonment to gather up what had fallen from him in those weary years, but he says in his naive way, "God did not permit it, and it would have been difficult. For great virtues are not noisy any more than are great rivers. They already have something of that peace of God which cannot be shaken, which we admire, but which we cannot understand." He goes on to speak of those who live in this peace: "It is a participation in the life of the blessed, and a beginning of that ineffable union with God Himself which will be perfected only in Heaven. It seems to me that those who enjoy such happiness have nothing to fear save being shaken in this."

Louis XIII., according to Lancelot, opened the prison door to all Richelieu's prisoners, and M. de Chavigny, the Governor of Vincennes, and M. Molé, offered themselves as securities for St Cyran. On the 6th of February 1642, St Cyran left his prison; his dear and faithful friend d'Andilly conveyed him away in his carriage, amidst farewells and tears of regret on the part of those whom he was leaving. The first thing

to do, d'Andilly thought, was to go and call on and thank St Cyran's two friends. M. de Chavigny was out, and Mme. de Chavigny received the ex-prisoner with all the haughtiness of a great lady, and evidently succeeded in giving him the cold shoulder. He said very little, Lancelot tells us, but the impression produced by Mme. de Chavigny was such that St Cyran never went again to her house. M. de Chavigny, however, often saw him. M. le President Molé gave him a warm welcome, and he then went on to Port Royal, where his nephew awaited him. That morning Mère Agnès had entered the refectory, and had unloosed her girdle before the Community, which sign the Sisters at once understood. They met him first in their chapel. where they sang a Te Deum, and then assembled in the parlour. Here a funny little incident occurred. One of the Priests took up an eyeglass and inspected St Cyran, to see if it were really he, and this so upset one nun, that she burst into laughter; her untimely mirth spread, and the overstrained Sisters fairly giggled. St Cyran was terribly austere, and the wretched Sisters must have quaked as they heard his words, "I had something to say, but it must be for another time."

Poor little nun, one hopes Mère Angélique was not unduly severe.

St Cyran slept at Port Royal and the next day returned to his own rooms, but he came frequently to Port Royal, and a week after his release a Mass of Thanksgiving was said. He was too ill to celebrate, so M. Singlin was the Celebrant and Antoine Arnauld and M. de Rebours (he who had caused the unseemly laughter) were the Deacons. Then the nuns sang a Te Deum, and St Cyran for once let himself go. He went into the sacristy and asked them to try the "Sors Scriptorum." Antoine had a Psalter, and Psalm xxxiv.[1] was found by M. Singlin. St Cyran sent everyone out of the church, but Lancelot and M. Singlin hid themselves and watched him as he lay prostrate, weeping, reciting the Psalm, yielding at last to a burst of thanks-

[1] In our version Ps. xxxv., "Judica Domine."

giving and of emotion. For the strain must have been terrible, and he was safe among the friends whom he loved so much, and for whose souls he watched and prayed and yearned. Then came a time of continual visits from people who crowded to see him. He left Paris for Port Royal des Champs in order to bestow some words of counsel on his spiritual sons.

M. Le Maître was, with St Cyran's approval, working at Hebrew and translating portions of the Psalms and of the Fathers, and also working with his hands. He is, as we have said before, the penitent *par excellence*, with great gifts of intellect and of nature, full of legal acumen, of imagination, of fervour.

Sainte Beuve has a fine passage: "Si ces Solitaires que nous avons à enumerer maintenant et à faire passer devant nous avaient dû sortir de leur desert et faire interruption dans le siècle, comme on l'a vu plus d'une fois de ceux de la Thebaïde accourant dans Alexandrie. . . . c'est avec M. Le Maître en tête qu'on les aurait vus marcher."

Great was Le Maître's joy to see the dear Master at Port Royal des Champs. Nicholas Fontaine, who has left memoirs touching and beautiful in their simple piety and whole-hearted devotion to Port Royal, has described this visit. They met, and tenderly did St Cyran embrace the faithful disciple whom he had guided into this way. He was much pleased with Port Royal, and had a long talk with Le Maître. At Fertè-Milon some devout ladies had pressed themselves on M. Le Maître, intending to follow his example and go into retirement; but at Port Royal de Paris, M. Singlin seems to have dropped a hint of this to M. de St Cyran, who had cautioned Le Maître to be extremely careful in all relations with women. Le Maître, with characteristic impetuosity, resolved for the future to speak, not only to no woman, but also to no man. St Cyran gently reproved him in the course of this conversation, and also assured him of Singlin's perfect innocence as to any mischief-making. The Solitaires were very human! Then came a discussion on a translation of some

parts of Cicero, and then M. de St Cyran went on to say:—

"I am nothing, but God is all. I am indeed rejoiced that He has planted in your soul a gratitude (which is not often found) for the extraordinary grace which He has bestowed on you by calling you to Him. It is true that men often think they have surrendered themselves to God when they have received [something] from Him, and many lose that grace because they have not valued it enough. I myself fear failure in this along with other people, and I would desire no other grace in this world than that of never growing lukewarm in the sense of what God has given me; above all in my imprisonment, which brought to me such great and wonderful favours that I could wish nothing else except that I might tell everyone what I was and am in my failures, which would make the magnificence of His grace better realised. Only to think of it fills me with emotion. It would be very wrong if I complained about my imprisonment. I could on the contrary have desired that it might last to my life's end, and that my life might be long or short as He pleased."

Fontaine gives us some admirable words, uttered as St Cyran strolled round Le Maître's room glancing at his books. St Augustine was the greatest, he said, of the Latin Fathers . . . As Apelles and other great painters executed many works about which they said little, and have executed only three or four *chef d'œuvres* which are inimitable, so God has lesser works, that is to say, men to whom He has given less grace, and a few incomparable men, as are St Augustine and a few others. St Chrysostom is the most excellent of the Greek Fathers. St Ambrose is excellent; he is obscure and he is not in such great esteem, because he is not understood. St Jerome has less of the spirit of Christianity than the others. St Cyprian is excellent. And so until he reached St Bernard, who is the last of the Fathers—"A burning spirit, a true Christian gentleman, a philosopher on the subject of grace."

The words on Aquinas are worth quoting. "St

Thomas is a great Theologian, an extraordinary Saint. No Saint has reasoned so much on the things of God. He lived in an epoch when philosophy was much thought of and when human reason was exalted"—the very antithesis of St Cyran!

Then he went on to speak of the regulation of the life of study, and his six points are worth noticing. How many quarrels, how much bitterness would be avoided if St Cyran's rule were ever observed. These are his rules, shortened—St Cyran is very prolix!—

"The first rule of mine is—you must guard in study (as a safeguard against the temptations of knowledge) against any worldly interest, and reject it with a generous scorn, as the Apostles shook the dust from their feet when they left behind them private homes in which they only found the world. This is what God has given you grace to do in the sight of all Paris: which should cause you continual joy in your soul, and make you every moment, as it were, say to God: 'Cantabiles mihi erant justificationes tuæ in loco peregrinationis mea.'

"The second rule is—to pray in every place according to the Apostle's counsel: 'Orate in omni loco levantes puras manus,' and to make one's readings and writings a perpetual prayer, which will be more pleasing to God, because it is uttered in humility before His truth, for the sake of which He says He came into the world; and because of that saying, we must love truth as Jesus Christ loved it, and only contemplate it as a ray dependent on His light: the sight of truth should be no more separated in us from love, than it can be separated from its source, which is Jesus Christ.

"The third rule is—that we should gladly speak of what we are doing to those who are of the same mind as ourselves. . . .

"The fourth rule is . . . that if the knowledge of divine things . . . grows in us more than . . . love and the grace of our Saviour, we shall lose that which knowledge brings. . . .

"The fifth rule is—that love must ever have the pre-eminence. . . .

"The sixth rule is—that one of the chief means to prevent being puffed up by knowledge . . . and to cause

love to outgrow knowledge, is to practise manual labour. . . ."

St Cyran went on to ask M. d'Andilly about the children, a son of M. d'Andilly and a son of Mme. de Saint Ange, who were being brought up at Port Royal under M. Le Maître's eye. He said :—

"But as we were speaking about children, I must thank you for the kindness with which you took on yourself little d'Andilly's and the small Saint Ange's education. I must ask your pardon for having proposed this to you. . . . There is no more meritorious work in God's eyes than working for his children. I am struck by the fact that God exalts things which seem small in themselves. That compels me to respect everything. It seems to me that when the things which seem small have some relation with God, we must regard them as great. . . ."

He goes on to say :—

"There is this consolation in all work undertaken for God, that he does not ask us for success but for work; as he says in His Gospel: let us content ourselves with that, and have no care whether in the pains we take for the instruction of our neighbour we succeed or not." He went on to speak of the gravity of post-Baptismal sin, and commended Le Maître for not hurrying on the children's Confirmation.

"You know each private individual has his own Pentecost, just as the Church has. The Sacrament of Confirmation is the Pentecost of Christians. It is misused when it is given lightly to small children."

M. de Séricourt was then sent for, and St Cyran spoke to him with peculiar tenderness, thanking him for the generous offer De Séricourt had made to share St Cyran's prison.

It was time now for St Cyran to leave Port Royal, and as he left he looked round on the quiet valley and said he would scold Mère Angélique for leaving so sweet a place. And so they parted, never to meet on

earth again, and M. Le Maître turned back again to his life of study and of prayer.

M. de St Cyran was not absolutely decided as to what course of life to adopt and what special work to take up. There was some idea that he should work again at a book specially directed against heresy, and M. Molé helped him in it. Gifts of money were sent in order that he might buy books. The work was to be against Calvin's errors concerning the Eucharist, Penitence, Justification, Church Authority and the Papal Authority.

But, as Lancelot remarks, St Cyran was only the David who collected the materials, and then no Solomon was raised up to form out of these a stately edifice. Nor can we much regret this. St Cyran's vocation was not really to write; his was the living influence which is transmitted by personal contact, by individual dealing, and no one cared less for posthumous fame, for literary immortality than he.

M. Singlin, who had replaced St Cyran at Port Royal, longed much to relinquish his office, but in vain did he implore his friend to relieve him. "Every day," he said, "I see faults that I commit in my work."

"We have to learn," replied St Cyran, "to bear our faults; it is enough if we own them before God; we must not think of them any more. Our whole Ministry is to be a perpetual prayer and a perpetual repentance. But all the same, we must not leave it.

"I always come back to the same advice that I have so often given you, and which I give myself—

"'Pray much, and never be in a hurry.'"

And he went on to say, in answer to some further objections, "You must remember it is neither he who plants nor he who waters who does anything; the growth comes only from God."

And when M. Singlin spoke of trouble and sorrow caused him by two penitents, St Cyran replied: "In hoc positi sumus. That is what we are for, to take trouble. If God allows our profession to be very painful, we must take it in patience and penitence."

Then Singlin tried his best to be excused preaching, but in vain. He said that he was no theologian, which was to some extent true then; he confessed that he felt some self-conceit about preaching; that he had once felt vexed when he had come to preach and found some one else was to take his place. St Cyran took no notice of the first point; people of the calibre of d'Andilly and M. Le Maître had found M. Singlin helpful, but he did not think it needful to remind M. Singlin of this, and only said that such impulses of self-satisfaction and displeasure were simply temptations, and then went on to describe his own method of preparing his sermons.

"He began with prayer, prayed frequently while he was writing his notes, and then, after his sermon, he retired to his room to kneel before God; he tried to avoid any conversation about his sermons; he ended by saying, 'Be simple, whether it be in teaching or in sermons; leave God to judge you, lest you fall into greater faults than those you think you have committed. For one cannot judge of one's own inward life, or of anybody else's, without God's illuminating light.'"

Louis XIII. died on Ascension Day, 1643, and the Jesuits immediately renewed their attack on St Cyran. A special attack was made on his Catechism, and the Archbishop of Paris was nearly persuaded to put out a condemnation of it, when through the efforts of the Princesse de Guémenée this was prevented. Rumours of fresh examinations, of summons before the Archbishop, reached St Cyran's ears; but he received them quietly, saying with a smile that, as God had helped him to escape a Cardinal, he would probably be helped to escape an Archbishop.

Port Royal was threatened; St Cyran took away some papers which he had left there, and Mère Angélique had brought before her the possibility of very real persecution.

St Cyran wrote her a long letter, in which he says:—

"The only thing which distresses me is the ignorance of those who think the greatest truths of religion are

errors. There is only one thing in which I am not of your opinion: I think weak people are more to be feared than wicked ones."

But, as Lancelot says, the tempest passed and God delivered His Servant and gave him Peace. Antoine Arnauld's book, of which we must now speak, *Sur la Fréquente Communion*, had just appeared, and had already provoked fierce animadversions. Lancelot tells us that St Cyran felt that the approval which several Bishops bestowed on this book was a vindication of his own position. To all intents and purposes he could say his Nunc Dimittis.

On Sunday, the 11th October 1642, St Cyran died, having received the last Sacraments. His dear and faithful disciple, Lancelot, presided over what seems to us the horrible mutilation of the much-loved frame. Various portions were sent to special friends as relics. In particular, M. Le Maître begged to have St Cyran's hands for his aunt, Mère Angélique.

On 13th October St Cyran's funeral took place, amid a concourse of distinguished people, clerical and lay. He lies in the Church of St Jacques du Haut Pas. His Abbey was bestowed on M. de Barcos, St Cyran's sister's son, in spite of all the efforts of the Jesuits to prevent it. M. de Chavigny managed this, and the Queen, Anne of Austria, observed on being thanked: "What would M. d'Andilly have said if I had given it to anyone else?"

St Cyran is the great figure of Port Royal. Had he lived, as Sainte Beuve says—if Port Royal could have been saved from the inextricable labyrinths of controversy which encompassed it later on, it would have been by following his method, his counsel. Nothing is further from the truth than to imagine that St Cyran is at all a preacher of something strange, some special doctrine. Not at all; what he did preach was the necessity of spiritual religion. There are many vocations, many and divers administrations, and to St Cyran was given the austerity, the fear and trembling

of many another saint. Again, to quote Sainte Beuve: "From the beginning of Christianity a list can be drawn up of those on the one hand who are distinguished for love and tenderness; on the other, for strength and sternness." Yet the opposite qualities meet in each, and the stern saint is known as the tender saint at times—in the Lord.

St Cyran was, as we have said, a supreme director, and as one turns over the pages of his letters one reads wonderful aphorisms, wonderful sentences of stern, uncompromising truth. God in all, man nowhere. Surely his motto, at any rate in his happy moods, was, "Deus est enim qui operatur in vobis et velle et perficere pro bona voluntate."

CHAPTER V

THE "SOLITAIRES" (1638)

THE little group of "Solitaires" or hermits who had, almost as it seemed by accident, associated themselves with Port Royal, is one of the most attractive features of this unique society. St Cyran had drawn to himself men of different characters, of varying antecedents, and each of his spiritual children received in such measure as he could bear it, the command, "faites pénitence." Many felt the need of retirement, of quiet, and by degrees a little society grew up, of whom M. Le Maître was the forerunner and the centre. One of those "green isles" of which Keble speaks so touchingly[1] is found here at Port Royal.

Again and again in every age men are found who feel the work of Prayer to be their vocation. They carry it out in different ways, but the underlying principle is the same. The note struck by one such society may be penitence; by another, service in foreign missions; by another, simply living the life of Jesus; but in all such societies there will be penitence, and prayer, and service, and the love of Christ. Only because human nature is limited and we can see only fragments of the Eternal truth, one feature, one reflection of the Christ Life is apt to be forced into greater prominence at one time than at another.

St Cyran is stern and the Port Royalist life is austere, but was there no cause? Should we be the worse if a deeper sense of the awfulness of sin, if the need for penitence took greater possession of our souls?

[1] In the *Poem for Advent Sunday.*

Now we turn to Fontaine, who together with Claude Lancelot always seems the most lovable and attractive of the Port Royal group outside the Arnauld family.

To Fontaine we owe Memoirs which are some of the most charming and human of the numerous volumes which have been written about Port Royal. He indeed is one of the examples of that beautiful type of religion which one meets with in France. Naive, tender, humble, loving, with no self-consciousness, no shyness, courageous, and loyal, and enduring. Sainte Beuve says of him, "Si Port Royal a eu dans Champagne son peintre régulier et sévère, il a par moments dans Fontaine son 'Fra Bartolommeo,'" and compares him to Madame de Motteville, who possessed imagination "sans y songer et fait vivre."[1]

Nicholas Fontaine was a Parisian, the son of a writing-master, who died when his son was only twelve. Nicholas had been strongly recommended by his father to the care of a certain Jesuit Father, who was a relation of the family, and who seems to have been very kind to the boy, but for some reason or other dissuaded him from entering the society. Fontaine's mother, a good and pious woman, had for a confessor one M. Hillerin, a great friend of "Messieurs de Port Royal," in whose parish no less a person than M. d'Andilly resided.

M. Hillerin took a great fancy to young Nicholas, brought him to live in his house, and introduced him to the great d'Andilly, for whom Fontaine conceived a passionate enthusiasm.

For M. Hillerin, Nicholas had a deep affection. He says it was most touching to observe Hillerin's deep piety and the humility which led him to make his confessions to M. de Saci, whom he had known as a small boy. M. Hillerin resigned his parish in time, led by St Cyran to a desire for deeper penitence and for retreat.

Nicholas was left by him at Port Royal. The former has left us a charming description of his early shyness and "mother-sickness," and how by degrees he grew to

[1] *Port Royal*, vol. ii., pp. 246, 247.

love the "Solitaires" and the life at Port Royal. He had the characteristic indifference of a Parisian of the seventeenth century for the country.

"When, in order to take the air, I went out sometimes and walked about outside, I confess that I felt struck by a secret terror in this sad solitude, which seemed to weep for the departure of 'religieuses,' who had forsaken it for some years, without any thought of return. Snakes were to be found in every part of the gardens; everything was in that state of dilapidation which always prevails in neglected places. If, however, this desert could have felt, it must have been glad that the 'Solitaires' had elected to reside in it, and had set up, while they awaited the return of the Sisters, a well-known school of penitence, so that this haunt of snakes was changed into a temple of God and a place of prayer."[1]

When Nicholas had settled down a little, he made great friends with a M. de Bascle. He belonged to the first group of "Solitaires," as he had joined M. Le Maître and M. de Sericourt.

M. de Bascle had come to Paris in 1635, after a series of the most horrible misfortunes; he was the son of a country gentleman, and was one of a large family of brothers and sisters. Three of these brothers were actually found strangled in their cradles; a wretched old woman had slaughtered the hapless babes, apparently because she really believed the poor children would aid some horrible incantation!

M. Etienne de Bascle grew up a grave, pure, steadfast youth, and fell into the clutches of a wicked wife. It really seemed as if the Eumenides were pursuing his fortunes. After a miserable life with her and a very bad illness, in which he was a prey to dreadful visions, he was granted a vision which completely turned his thoughts to God. When after long delays he got rid of his wife, he came to Paris, and fell in with M. de St Cyran, who found him employment as a tutor, but gave him no spiritual aid, as de Bascle asked for none. But again

[1] *Fontaine*, vol. i., p. 218.

he returned to Paris, and this time he did seek out St Cyran, and became a fervent penitent, joining the Solitaires, and no doubt finding peace and happiness at last. He, Lancelot tells us, always "called me his elder brother." The two had made their confessions one after the other in Holy Week, 1638, and it seems that Etienne de Bascle did not receive absolution that day. Indeed, he continued to visit St Cyran at Vincennes and received later the gift of reconciliation.

At St Cyran's death, M. de Bascle was the subject of one of those cures which it is of no sort of use to deny. He came into the room where St Cyran was lying, and certainly, Lancelot says, was cured of his lameness, by the touch of St Cyran's body.

He fell ill again some years afterwards, but was again restored. He attributed his recovery to prayers said at St Cyran's tomb, rather than to remedies given him by a quack doctor.

Nicholas tells us how he saw M. Le Maître in a grey coat with a great log of wood, which he carried up and down stairs when he felt cold, until he warmed himself by the exercise.

Great was the joy of the young recluse when he heard that M. d'Andilly was coming. And the following scene seems to describe a bit of real inhumanity on the part of M. Le Maître and M. Manguelen, who was the confessor to the "Solitaires."

"As I was waiting for him more impatiently than the rest, I was surprised that on the day he was going to arrive at noon, after I had read aloud during dinner, as is the ordinary practice of communities, I saw M. Manguelen and M. Le Maître coming slowly towards me, with bent heads, and apparently thinking about nothing. When I sat down to dinner, M. Le Maître, pushed on by M. Manguelen, who let him be the spokesman . . . as he could put things better than M. Manguelen, said in a sepulchral tone: 'You are very fond of M. d'Andilly, aren't you?' 'Yes, surely,' said I. 'You will be very glad to see him, then?'"

And poor Nicholas goes on to tell a dismal tale. He was convinced by M. Le Maître that it was his duty to avoid M. d'Andilly, and when they met he was to feign extreme stupidity. He did this so obediently and completely that M. d'Andilly (we are sure with a shrug of his shoulders) observed that solitude had apparently turned the boy's head.

He became De Saci's special follower, and as we shall see, shared his imprisonment. Probably, indeed, Le Maître and M. de Manguelen thought De Saci a better Superior for the boy than old M. d'Andilly; but they might have taken another and less fantastic way of separating the friends.

About 1643, a whole family became attached to Port Royal, that of M. Gentien Thomas. This Norman family was much the same in character as the Arnaulds. Indeed it is from this worthy section of society, the upper middle class, chiefly "Gens de la Robe," that Port Royal was recruited. Some great people came and went, but these families of Thomas and others were the genuine Port Royalists who were grafted in to the original Arnauld stock. M. Gentien Thomas, whose son, M. Pierre Thomas du Fossé,[1] has left us memoirs, was established at Rouen, where he had married a wife, and was much esteemed for his uprightness and faithfulness. He was a *Maître des Requêtes.*

M. Gentien Thomas was distressed and vexed by the determination of his Parish Priest to give up his cure of souls. Finding that it was St Cyran who had brought this about, off went M. Gentien Thomas to remonstrate with St Cyran, and found him at Port Royal. St Cyran listened quietly to the heated remonstrances of the excellent Rouen gentleman, and then began to speak himself. To such effect did he speak, that M. Gentien forgot all about his Curé and began to think about himself. "Indeed, indeed M.

[1] Le Fossé was an estate in Normandy which M. Gentien Thomas possessed, and which M. Pierre Thomas inherited, and from which he was known as M. du Fossé.

l'Abbé," he gasped out at last, "I thought I had come to see you about my Curé, but I see it was for myself and my own salvation."

M. Thomas paid St Cyran several visits, and the effect of this was the whole-hearted conversion of the worthy gentleman, who returned to Rouen, resolved, like Zaccheus, "that if he had wronged any man he would restore fourfold," and that he would try to bring up his children in "the fear of the Lord."

M. Pierre Thomas du Fossé, known as M. du Fossé, the author of the *Mémoires* which bear his name, tells us that the effect on his mother was not less profound. "She was a handsome young woman, related to most of the principal people of Rouen; she was much liked by her relations, whose affection she returned; she was very fond of society."

M. Thomas's account of his interviews with M. de St Cyran so wrought on his wife that she determined to go to Paris also, and was taken in at Port Royal by Mère Angélique, who helped and guided her much. Then, after a Retreat of some six weeks, she went back to her husband, and they both resolved to lead an entirely new life. They did indeed so effectually change their habits and were so much more in church and so much less in the world than in former days, that much gossip was excited in the good town of Rouen, and people jeered and wondered at the couple not a little.

M. and Madame Thomas retired to the parish of Rouville, near Havre. The Curé of this parish was M. Guillebert, St Cyran's friend. The family lived in the house of a relation of theirs, the Dame de Frêsle. Here also lived the mother of M. de Bernières, the faithful friend of Port Royal. Du Fossé in his delightful *Mémoires* gives a charming account of this little *côterie*, which was somewhat akin to Little Gidding.

The two brothers, the Sieur des Landes and the Sieur de Bouteillerie, whom we shall see attending to the elder M. Pascal and bringing about his conversion, were neighbours of the Thomas circle, and each showed

a spirit of most practical piety, by building hospitals on their own estates.

Du Fossé gives us an interesting description of the conversion of a Jew; the whole of his *Mémoires* is delightful quite apart from Port Royal associations. He paints a vivid picture of the times. There is a story of the murder of a connection of his, which might have come straight out of Dumas.

Pierre Thomas says that at home, "the fear of God was instilled into us, the avoidance of sin, a great horror of deceit. I can indeed affirm I have never known more sincere and open-hearted people than my parents."

M. Gentien Thomas sent his boys to Port Royal to be brought up, and in company with a few others they studied and led a simple innocent life, learning St Cyran's Catechism of *Théologie familière*, and were sheltered entirely from any breath of controversy.

Pierre Thomas gives a delightful description of the life at Paris in *Les Petites Écoles*. He tells us of great games of soldiers, and how he and his companions made a fort, which was regularly attacked and defended. And there is a very pretty account of a Twelfth Day festivity and of the Twelfth Day King.

The boys were taken on Sundays to Vespers at the Chapel of Port Royal, and heard M. Singlin's great sermons; he seems to have greatly impressed the youthful Pierre. M. du Fossé gives interesting details about the beginning of the Fronde.

The young Du Fossé went to Port Royal des Champs in 1649. Antoine Le Maître took a great fancy to him, and bestowed endless pains on his education.

"He set me to read the best passages of the poets and orators" (Greek and Latin of course). He pointed out to the eager boy the special beauties of these passages. He taught him how to read aloud, and also the art of translation. Grammar was only a means, not an end. In fact, Pierre du Fossé received a literary education. A good many boys came to Les Granges

after the war; among them was M. de Villeneuve, son of M. d'Andilly, and the son of the Dame de Frêsle. There seem to have been delightful walks and expeditions into the country, and innocent little adventures, and there is a quaint account of a little school quite near, where a few boys were brought up on Port Royal principles. Among these was a younger brother of Du Fossé. Unluckily the good Abbé who directed them could not manage to keep his expenses in agreement with his income, and the school was broken up. M. de Tillemont was Du Fossé's greatest friend. Sebastian de Tillemont, the future ecclesiastical historian, was the son of M. Le Nain, also a *Maître des Requêtes*, himself a holy and humble man of heart, the father of three sons: the historian, another who became Sub-Prior at the celebrated Monastery of La Trappe, and a third who became a lawyer.

The future historian was only ten when he joined *Les Petites Écoles*, but from the very first he was a prodigy, one of those grave, sweet-tempered children to whom study is play and play work. Nicole, of whom we shall say something by-and-bye, was his tutor, and seems to have been terrified by his pupil's precocity. He was always a holy youth, and from his first days at school a friend of Pierre du Fossé, his senior by three years. The two lived together for some time after the dispersion of *Les Petites Écoles*.

M. de Tillemont's ecclesiastical history is really a great book. Gibbon himself speaks of it with respect. His life was extraordinarily calm and laborious, and excepting that he was obliged to leave Port Royal finally in 1679, he was not inconvenienced by persecution. We will return to him.

The most noted of all the "Solitaires," next to M. Le Maître, was undoubtedly M. d'Andilly, the elder brother of Mère Angélique, who came to Port Royal in 1646. He became the patriarch of Port Royal, and the father of all the society which was collected there.

M. d'Andilly had always lived in the great world. He has left us Memoirs of the first part of his life, and

they give us a picture of a good man, not faultless by any means, but with a real purpose to serve God and the King.

He was a true Arnauld, passionately attached to all his family, and to his father-in-law and mother-in-law. His eldest son, who has also left Memoirs, indeed accuses his father of favouritism in his family, and of having much preferred his second son, who was known afterwards as M. de Pomponne, from an estate inherited from M. d'Andilly's wife, the daughter of M. de la Boderie, who had at one time been Ambassador at the English Court.

M. d'Andilly was brought up among state affairs, and his knowledge of them was considerable. He was always upright and pure, in a Court where such virtues were by no means easy. As the notice prefixed to his Memoirs says :—

"He was pure in the midst of the Court, uncorruptible among many opportunities of enriching himself, immovable amid the attractions and cares of the world."

No doubt the friendship with St Cryan did as much for d'Andilly as it did for Angélique, and Agnès, and Marie Claire, and for the nephews, Le Maître, De Saci, and the rest.

In his Memoirs he tells us of his career, and how that career was checked by the ill-will of the Constable de Luines, the favourite of Louis XIII., who prevented his obtaining the post held by Isaac Arnauld d'Andilly, d'Andilly's uncle, who was *Intendant des Finances.* (The son of the Constable became Duc de Luines, and was strongly attached to Port Royal.) He held other posts, and was much about "Monsieur" (Louis XIII.'s brother). Then came a rupture with Monsieur, and a short retirement, and then in 1634 he obtained the post of *Intendant de l'Armée.*"[1]

D'Andilly was extremely popular; great ladies were very fond of him; people in high places esteemed him.

[1] This involved the attending to the feeding and transport of the army despatched by Richelieu to the Rhine.

He enjoyed society, and he knew every one worth knowing. Evidently, however, his eldest son saw blemishes and spoke plainly enough of them.

"I may say that my father enjoyed a great reputation in society, and passed for an extraordinary man. . . . He was extremely affectionate, and as love is so particularly enjoined on us by the new law, he let himself yield to affections which no shadow of impurity ever darkened. He loved his friends dearly: but it might be said that new friendships were always a little preferred by him to old ones."

This is a little bit spiteful. As one reads the son's Memoirs (after a military career, he took orders and became possessed in his old age of the Abbey of Chaumes) one can see that the eldest son of M. d'Andilly was not at all in sympathy with his father, and there were bickerings, as is not uncommon, on the subject of money. One can quite see both points of view. M. d'Andilly was at least careful as to his son's education; the Abbé tells us how grateful he is to his father for the care bestowed on himself and his brothers. They were brought up by St Cyran's nephew, M. de Barcos, and then sent to College at Lisieux.

It does not seem that M. d'Andilly was particularly tyrannical towards his eldest son. He allowed him to choose his profession and become a soldier; and like many another smart young officer, the young man found it difficult to reconcile his own and his father's ideas on expenditure.

The Abbé tells us how much d'Andilly disliked leaving his home, and the pleasant society which gathered round him, for the post of *Intendant de l'Armée.*

"It may be said that no man ever passed a more enjoyable or happier life than his. He had a circle of reputable relations around him, and there was little need for him to go from home to seek pleasanter society elsewhere. He saw a great deal of his friends, and liked pleasant conversation and wit; and chiefly at the Hôtel de Rambouillet (the mere name recalls the wittiest and most refined society of France), he enjoyed such intense

and pure pleasures, that it would have been hard for him to find greater happiness in whatever rank of life he might have been."[1]

We remember that it was in company with Mlle. D'Argennes, daughter of Mme. de Rambouillet, that M. d'Andilly paid St Cyran the visit ordered by Richelieu.

These few words call up to us a picture of the bright, witty, refined society which is summed up for us in those words, the "Hôtel de Rambouillet."

The Port Royalists never had much tenderness for or appreciation of the artistic side of life, and M. d'Andilly and Racine are the connecting links with the world of literature, wit, poetry.

It would take us too far afield to describe the Hôtel Rambouillet, but it is to be remembered that, under the noble *châtelaine*, for the first time in French society persons of wit, of learning, of original talent, found themselves admitted on an equal footing with nobles and high-born dames.

On every one who read, or who "conversed" (a fine art at that epoch), the influence of the Hôtel de Rambouillet was felt. We all know that "preciosity" was the Nemesis which awaited those who cared overmuch for the peculiar nicety and discrimination of language.

Among these witty and refined and gay people d'Andilly lived, and was loved, respected, and a little bit laughed at.

Long years after his retreat (1676), Mme. de Sevigné writes: "Nous faisions la guerre au bon homme d'Andilly, qu'il avoit plus d'envie d'une âme qui étoit dans un beau corps qu'une autre."

It was M. d'Andilly who persuaded the Princesse de Guémenée to put herself under St Cyran's direction. De Retz has some mocking remarks on the subject, so far as the Princess' state is concerned, but even he observes that d'Andilly's devotion to the Princess was "en Dieu et purement spirituellement." But, as

[1] *Mémoires de l'Abbé Arnauld.*

d'Andilly himself tells us, the loss of his wife led him to think of retiring from the world, and St Cyran's death fully determined him.

No place could be so suitable as Port Royal, where already were his son and his nephew; and so this "desert," as he calls it, was his chosen hermitage.

It is characteristic of the family that before leaving the world M. d'Andilly had a short controversy with a lawyer of Toulouse, president of the "Parlement" of Toulouse, who had in a book recently published maligned d'Andilly as "one of the Cardinal's creatures." D'Andilly replied by publishing a volume of letters to Richelieu. Certainly, whatever were his faults, subservience was not to be counted one.

And so having made all his preparations he arrived at Port Royal and established himself in this "demeure si affreuse." But he soon changed the appearance of things. He chose for manual labour to work as a gardener, to plant fruit-trees, and by degrees a beautiful garden with fruit-bearing trees was made. D'Andilly regularly divided his time between working in the garden (he also drained a marsh), prayer, and study. He gave to the little society of Port Royal something which it lacked before—something of grace, kindness, humanity. He left some literary work behind him, a translation of Josephus, and a collection of lives of the first hermits, entitled *Pères des Deserts*, translations of St Augustine, St Theresa, and others. It is well for us to recall Sainte Beuve's decision that "Litterairement, M. d'Andilly a rendu de vrais services à la langue . . . il suffirait de rappeler que M. de Rochefoucault lui envoyait une copie de ses Mémoires, pour obtenir en lui des corrections, particulièrement sur la pureté du style." He wrote a good deal of poetry, but poetry which it is not likely that a future century will revive or greatly care to read.

Fontaine has a touching passage :—

"Oh my God, with what joy have we seen this holy old saint's retirement to Port Royal, which was really more of a home to him than the one he had left. Every

time one met him, the first affection for him was always renewed. He was so steadfast, he never failed in those first resolutions. It might be said of him: 'What went ye out for to see? A reed shaken with the wind?' O God, Thou hast set him upon a rock. The winds might blow: the storms and tempests rage: the violence of earthly might, which nothing could resist, was able to send him for a time away from his beloved solitude, but his heart was always there and Thy powerful Hand brought him back in spite of human plots. He came to finish his earthly life, dividing his hours between prayer and Mass, mental and bodily work; devoting himself to his work of translation, and to the care of the garden and the trees. He often said he had compelled nature to be abundant in fruits, which grew to a prodigious size. It was in this blessed repose and in quiet occupations that he ended his career. Never was any emblem or device more suitable than that which was placed beneath his portrait—a swan quietly sailing on the water singing her dying song, and the motto, 'Quam dulci senex quiete.'"

Du Fossé says: "He held various appointments at Court and in the Department of Finance. Always his hands were clean and his mind devoid of any self-interest. When he left his various employments he was, if anything, rather poorer than when he began."

M. Le Maître is the chief of these "Solitaires." His life was divided between prayer, manual labour and study. He learned Hebrew during his retirement, in order that he might be able to translate the Psalms. He worked at the Fathers, and translated extracts from them; he worked eagerly, almost furiously, at manual labour. Fontaine has told us how difficult a struggle it was for Le Maître to overcome the strong repugnance which he felt (perhaps not unnaturally) to placing himself under his younger brother De Saci's direction. It arose on this wise:—

M. Singlin, after St Cyran's death, was completely over-burdened with the cares which had fallen upon him. Very soon after that irreparable loss, he fixed his attention on a certain M. Manguelen, who like most of the later converts had been attracted by Antoine

Arnauld's *La Fréquente Communion.* Manguelen had retired to Port Royal, but left it in a few months to accompany the Bishop of Bazas back to his diocese. M. De Bazas had made a Retreat at Port Royal which he would willingly have made lifelong, but M. Singlin induced him to return to his diocese, and sent with him, at his own request, M. Manguelen. About a year afterwards the Bishop died, and M. Manguelen returned to Port Royal. To his surprise and somewhat to his dismay, M. Singlin proposed to him to take the direction of "Messieurs de Port Royal."

Fontaine has given us a charming description :—

"M. Manguelen listened to this with his usual gentleness, and as he could not resist M. Singlin's proposition, he submitted to a yoke the weight of which M. Singlin promised to bear the greater part, which weight he already diminished by the support of his counsels. M. Singlin left all his other occupations in order to take M. Manguelen to Port Royal." No sooner had they arrived, than M. Singlin (to cut Fontaine a little short) told M. Le Maître of the necessity there was for another confessor, and that every one of the "Solitaires" might absolutely trust M. Manguelen. And he then suggested that M. Le Maître and all the "Solitaires" should go to M. Manguelen's room and pay him their respects.

Accordingly, the next day after Matins all the "Solitaires" followed M. Le Maître to M. Manguelen's room, M. de Séricourt, M. Luzanci, M. de Beaupuis, M. Bascle, M. Visaguet, M. Moreau, M. de la Rivière, M. Pallu, and several others. "And I too," says Fontaine, "I was there like a sheep following the rest, and hardly comprehending what it was all about; . . . However, in spite of my youth, this affair made a great impression on me, for I have never forgotten that day, and although it all happened more than fifty years ago, it is as vivid as if it were only yesterday. It is true, that in the silence of the night, I much enjoyed hearing M. Le. Maître's utterance of beautiful thoughts as representing us all. Certainly no other person of the society could have said anything comparable to it. I still remember, how he said to M. Manguelen . . . that we had come to throw ourselves into his arms, etc. . . .

and concluded by owning his own grief at the weakness he would find in us, but it was to be hoped his charity would cover all our faults, and that our goodwill, slight as it was, would help him to excuse the rest."

"M. Manguelen heard us very calmly; coldness was his peculiar inheritance, and was natural to him. He answered M. Le Maître and looked at us, and seemed more intent on seeing us than on speaking to us. He got out a few words with difficulty in so low a tone that we could hardly hear." [Probably poor M. Manguelen was extremely shy rather than cold.] "He said God and M. Singlin knew how unequal he was to the task laid on him; he had done all he could to evade it, and would we all not take offence at weaknesses which his frail health might cause him to betray. At these words we all threw ourselves at his feet to receive his blessing, and we went away."

M. Manguelen died very shortly afterwards (1646), and M. Singlin, who did not arrive in time to see him alive, was overwhelmed with grief. Two years later, De Saci was ordained Priest, and became the spiritual guide of Port Royal des Champs.

We have been anticipating the history somewhat.

Returning to the first "Solitaires"—we have already noticed M. de Séricourt, the soldier who lived on terms of the deepest affection with his elder brother—Fontaine tells us in simple and beautiful language how M. de Séricourt became possessed with the idea that he ought to enter the Carthusian order; this was a blow to the elder brother, who, however, replied as follows to De Séricourt's confession (the whole conversation is so characteristic of Fontaine's naive and childlike style, that we will transcribe it):—

"'My brother,' said he (M. Le Maître) to M. de Séricourt . . . 'God is our Master. If He calls you to the Chartreuse, you must not draw back. You can guess if nature does not rebel in me. . . .' 'I love you,' replied M. de Séricourt. 'I always feel you were the instrument which God used to draw me from the world, and my conversion was the result of yours. . . . If it seems that God wills to separate me from you, I will

follow Him without resistance. What I beg and entreat you, dear brother, by that tender affection you have always shown me, is that now in this important time you will add your prayers to mine that God would teach me to know His will."[1]

But this design of De Séricourt came to nothing. On the pretext of some delicacy of health, the head of the order declined to receive him. "Messieurs de Port Royal" were already not in good odour. De Séricourt remained at Port Royal until his death.

A young son of M. d'Andilly, M. de Luzanci, joined his cousins. He seems to have been a charming youth, with a keen sense of the attractions of the great world. A rather delicate boy with little taste for study, he had entered Cardinal Richelieu's service as one of his pages. But a sister of his, Catherine de St Agnès, had already entered religion at Port Royal, and the boy seems to have been taught by her to feel a deep horror of sin. Then came a great temptation. He promised to be a friend's second in a duel, and this was only prevented by the Cardinal's forbidding it, for Richelieu did his best to put down duels. Luzanci felt great remorse, and a bad illness strengthened an already half-formed resolution to forsake the world. Still he felt he must see some service first, and managed to do so. An attack of smallpox finally determined him. After his recovery he stayed for some time with St Cyran's great friend, Madame de Saint Ange, and placed himself under the direction of the Abbé, then a prisoner at Vincennes. After some time he joined his cousins at Port Royal, and there all his excellent qualities and winning character developed into very real saintliness. He had a peculiar grace of tenderness; he was tender to the poor and sick, and was much loved by the servants of Port Royal. For forty years yet we shall find him, not always at Port Royal, but always living the life of prayer and of penitence. He did not die until 1684.

To these were now added several more.

[1] *Fontaine*, vol. ii., pp. 195-196.

M. Victor Pallu, the owner of a small property near Tours and a doctor of medicine, had been drawn to holy things, as so many are, by the sight of death. He had been attached as physician to the Comte de Soissons and had been much impressed by the death of his patron on the field of battle. Restless and uneasy, he consulted a near relation, the Bishop of Marseilles, who, however, died very soon; and then M. Pallu found in M. de St Cyran all that he needed. Arnauld's famous book, which was in all the first flush of success, fell into his hands while he was staying at Forges, a health resort at that time much in vogue. He saw St Cyran again, and retired to Port Royal for a rest, as he thought for a few days, but in reality for a lifelong sojourn.

He was a tiny little person, full of good humour, good taste, and kindness. It was almost a pleasure to be ill, said Fontaine, in order that one might have a talk with M. Pallu.

The little doctor was only thirty-seven when he left the world for Port Royal. To the "Solitaires" he brought something of the *bonhomie* and *savoir vivre* of a vivacious Frenchman. He was one of those who serve God cheerfully, underneath whose cheerful exterior lay a depth of religious freedom and of charity. In a letter quoted by M. de Sainte Beuve he wrote :—

"I declare to you that it almost makes me suspect my ordinary course of life—to pass it so happily; only innocent people should enjoy such a life fearlessly; a sinner such as I am ought to fear this *silence* of God . . . As I have misused lawful things I must voluntarily bear privation of them. Those who owe much are obliged to inconvenience themselves in order to discharge the debt."

It is diverting to find a countryman of our own, "un gentilhomme anglais," among the "Solitaires," a typical Briton, tall and fierce-looking, but very gentle in reality, and an excellent cook. "He offered himself most willingly to the work of cooking, and it might be said of him as of St Paulin, that in a wholly carnal occupation he did not cease to be spiritual."

And there was Charles de la Croix, who had been sent, as we said, by St Cyran from Vincennes, and who died in 1643—one of those simple, fervent souls who are taught by God only, and serve Him with the labours of their hands. He was only twenty-six when he died, having acted as servant to the "Solitaires." Although, says one of the chroniclers of Port Royal, he was ignorant, it was noticed that he was also full of spiritual enlightenment, and he grasped very quickly the deep truths of the Faith and of Holy Scripture. Lancelot watched over him in his last moments, and tells us how the dying youth longed to be laid on the plank bed on which he generally slept, in passionate desire to be more like the Lord, whose Image hung before his eyes. Good, tender-hearted little M. Pallu would not hear of this—M. Le Maître would willingly have complied.

Amongst the younger "Solitaires" was a M. Lindo, son of a rich Paris tradesman, who lived a year at Port Royal loved by everyone, loved very much by Manguelen, a simple, open-hearted boy. Fontaine gives us a charming picture of him which one cannot resist quoting:—

"I think, if I remember rightly, that he had been a Carthusian; but his delicate health was not able to bear the rule. M. Singlin sent him to M. Manguelen, who, after having shaped him for a year, gave him back to God, who called him by a gentle death, caused by great summer heat. M. Manguelen sent in front of him this dear son, the fruit of his love and his watchfulness, whom he was, alas! to follow very soon. We felt this death to be a very great loss. Everyone declared that because of his innocence he was the best of those who lived in this desert. But God comforted us in the same moment as He afflicted us; while He took from us our very best, He received from our hands the first-fruits of this desert. He was a beautiful innocent in a place where there were beautiful penitents."

Perhaps one may now speak of the sort of life which the "Solitaires" lived.

At 3 A.M. they rose, and said certain prescribed prayers; then came Matins and Lauds, and they returned to their rooms. There was a daily reading of a chapter from the Gospel and of one from the Epistles, and meditation. At 6.30 came Prime, at 9 Terce and Mass, and at 11 Sext and self-examination. Then came dinner and a rest, and manual work; Nones, Vespers in the afternoon, and supper at 6. At 7 or thereabouts was said Compline, then a prayer for the dead, Psalm li., self-examination, and at 8 the day ended. Four hours were devoted to manual labour.

In regard to austerity, the rule was sufficiently stern. Abstinence from meat could not be observed, but as a compensation, there was only one meal and a light refection every day, and meals of bread and water were plentiful. The beds were hard; the use of the discipline and of the hair shirt was frequent. Confession and Communion were more or less frequent in different individuals, fortnightly, weekly, or even more often.

It is a beautiful picture which Fontaine gives, on which one loves to linger. This little group so given up to plain living, to high thinking, has around it a peculiar aroma of refined, delicate, reticent devotion. But they were to be further tried and purified before God found them worthy for Himself.

In every age the world, especially the officially religious world, hates with an extraordinary fervour those who show it with brutal frankness that its pleasures, rewards, penalties, are nothing in comparison to that Vision of God which once seen can never be forgotten—

> "A quella luce cotal si diventa
> Che volgersi da lei per altro aspetto
> È impossibile che mai si consenta,"[1]

says the greatest of Christian poets, a soul as different from any Port Royalist as could well be found, and yet stamped with that likeness which the School of the

[1] *Paradiso*, xxxiii., 100.

Cross imprints on all who learn in that school, who tread the "Via Dolorosa."

There seems to be very little reason why the band of "Solitaires" should have excited suspicion. But it did. Slanderous tongues were swift to speak words that might do hurt, even as early as 1644. "They were a band of conspirators, of would-be reformers." And Anne of Austria lent her ear to these idle tales. As yet, however, no persecution had fallen to them or on Port Royal.

CHAPTER VI

THE PORT ROYAL DES CHAMPS (1635-1648)

WHILE Port Royal is still left in comparative peace we will try to gain some idea of the inner life which Mère Angélique influenced and indeed dominated, and which produced such remarkable results. As we saw, in 1637 the religious who belonged to the short-lived *Institut du Saint Sacrement* were translated to Port Royal.

This brought about a change of habit. The Port Royal nuns had hitherto worn the black scapulars common to their order, but now they were uniting themselves with the *Institut du Saint Sacrement.* Mère Angélique says: "I thought it would be better to change nothing, but Anne Eugénie thought otherwise. One day during this time of indecision, while a tidying-up was going on, a box which had been sent over from the *Institut du Saint Sacrement* was discovered; it had been unopened for eight or nine years, and was full of the white scapulars with the red cross which the Sisters of the *Saint Sacrement* had packed up after their return to Port Royal." Anne Eugénie persuaded Mère Angélique to adopt them, and, as Angélique says, the scarlet cross on the white scapular no doubt reminded those who wore it of the Apocalyptic Vision of St John, of those who had washed their garments and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb.

About this time Génévière le Tardif, who was the first elected Abbess, died. After the nuns of the *Institut* were incorporated into Port Royal, Mère

Génévière had lived the holy, blameless life of a simple nun, content to be servant of all. A touching account is given of her in *Vies Edifiantes et Intéressantes.* Through an accident she became totally blind, and suffered very much. Angélique de St Jean (the second Mère Angélique) says, in describing her death :—

"I do not know if I ought to speak about something which happened at her death. The whole Community was present when she expired, and as usual we sang the *Subvenite*, but what seemed to us so extraordinary was that other voices seemed to mingle and to produce a harmony which seemed supernatural. Was it wholly imagination? for we had complete security that the angels were rejoicing, and the feeling we had in our hearts was true."

After the influence of the Bishop of Langres had been withdrawn, Port Royal had suffered little direct persecution. The greatest trial as yet known to the inmates was the arrest and imprisonment of their much-loved director St Cyran. And since his release, life had been tolerably smooth. Mère Angélique was inspired with the wish to return to Port Royal des Champs, the true Port Royal, the Port Royal which, as St Cyran had told her, she ought never to have left! In 1650 she writes to the Abbess of Gif, who had consulted her as to the pros and cons of moving her Community to Paris :—

"My dear Mother, in obedience to your wish, I will answer you quite simply, as to your proposal to remove to Paris. I think I was persuaded to make my exchange by much the same reasons as those you now bring forward, and I think now I was wrong, although I had no hesitation then. But I see now that I did not ask counsel from God as much as I did from men, and that my secret inclinations led me astray and made me unworthy of being enlightened by God and prevented from entangling myself in embarrassment which nearly ruined us; only God helped us in wholly unexpected and wonderful ways."[1]

[1] *Lettres de la Mère Angélique*, vol. i., letter cccx.

St Cyran himself had blamed the Mother for leaving Port Royal des Champs, and from his prison had advised her not to allow the buildings to fall into ruin.

"God acts with communities and monasteries which He loves, just as he does with persons whom He loves, who are of His elect. He ruins them to prevent the only true ruin, that is of the soul, that ruin which they would cause themselves through relaxation of discipline if they went on longer. The spirit of poverty in a monastery which has been transferred to a town would naturally oppose as much as possible the ruin of the building which was left, in the hope that God, who with His angels still inhabits this ruined church, may some day bring religious back to it. So to take care of the dormitory with this hope is a real evidence of the spirit of poverty."

The house in Paris was now too small for the Community, which seemed an excellent reason for sending some of the inmates back again.

After some delays, the Archbishop of Paris gave his consent, and Angélique was allowed to remove some of her nuns on condition that the Community in the country should be under the authority of the same Ordinary and Abbess as was the Paris Community. Angélique made an expedition to Port Royal in 1646. Twenty years had passed away since she had left it, and she had become an elderly woman tried by many sad experiences, and raised to a spiritual height of self-abnegation, of lofty moral ideals, of complete and utter unworldliness. She was the same Mère Angélique who had reformed Port Royal and cleansed Maubuisson, but the experiences of Paris and above all the direction of St Cyran and Singlin had ripened the fruits of holiness, and she was now a very remarkable woman; her letters and conversations show extraordinary spiritual insight and humility. There was yet a further height to climb before she reached her Calvary; the last Beatitude was yet to be hers.

The aspect of Port Royal was a good deal changed in the twenty years. "Les Messieurs de Port Royal,"

the Solitaires, had drained the marshes and had planted fruit-trees.

It was great joy to the Mother to meet these Solitaires and to see with her own eyes the wonderful lives of prayer and of work and of detachment led by the little company.

She made more than one journey to Port Royal, before she was able to arrange her final departure from Paris, which took place on the 13th of May 1648. Great was the joy of the peasants of the neighbourhood at the arrival of the little company of seven Choir (including the Mother) and two Lay Sisters. A number of people were collected in the courtyard to welcome Mère Angélique, and at the door of the church were the Solitaires, who followed the nuns inside and sang a Te Deum. Two or three days were occupied in settling down. On the Sunday following their arrival the Divine Offices were said, and the habitual round of prayer and work began.

A little book entitled *Les Constitutions de Port Royal* contains the rules for the guidance of the Sisters, printed after the destruction of the Monastery, but dating from 1648. It is a touching little volume. The rules do not differ very much from those of other religious Communities; there is a striking absence of anything exaggerated or fantastic. There breathes in them the lofty, austere, yet tender spirit inspired by St Cyran. It was a bracing atmosphere in which Port Royal nuns moved.

There is a characteristic word on confession:—

"It is better to go to confession less often when we can make our confession with more reverence and care . . . the Sacrament [of Penance] is often useless to those who are not as careful to mortify and to correct themselves as they are to use confession."

What has been called a mechanical use of sacraments was alien to Port Royal. All through the rules there breathes the same idea of poverty which we know inspired Mère Angélique; everything was to be

simple. There is a curious little direction about incense: "Only moderately good incense to be used."

One of the charges brought against Port Royal was, as we have seen, infrequency of Communion. Here is a quotation from the Constitutions. It is found in a meditation on the "profession of a Novice."

"This Institut gives us the right of aspiring to very frequent Communion, for the children of the Bridegroom cannot fast while He is with them, and that Spiritual Communion which we ought incessantly to practise, and which causes us to rest our hearts on our most precious gift, the Eucharist itself, should lead us to the Holy Communion as often as our rule permits, ever hungering and thirsting for it."

United with the deepest devotion, or rather perhaps because this devotion was so deep and true, there existed a spirit of strong, sanctified common sense. The Gift of Wisdom seems to have been fully poured out on Mère Angélique.

One of the Sisters says (in the *Mémoires pour Servir*): "God had given her a singular grace which enabled her to touch the hardest hearts and encourage the most despondent spirits." And the same Sister says, that however much awe and respect the Community might feel for Angélique, yet "we felt a peculiar freedom of mind and a great openness of heart when we talked to her."

The Mother had a great dislike of what she called *false* devotion; she much preferred, for instance, that if a Sister had finished a particular bit of work in good time she should use the extra moments of leisure in helping a more tardy companion rather than indulging a love for extra prayer.

Mère Angélique's maxim was to put things from the beginning on a high level, "every thought, every desire, should only bring about in her Monastery absolute perfection of poverty, simplicity, separation from the world, silence among the Sisters."

The same Sister says she well remembers the Mother

saying to her: "You wept when you said Good-bye to Mère Agnès. . . . Never mind, my child . . . only keep in your mind and meditate on the words, 'Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God,' and you must not set your heart on any created thing." The Sister often pondered over this conversation, and when, only three or four years afterwards, the persecution broke out . . . "and those most precious, most necessary people were taken from us, I remembered these words, and had no difficulty in understanding their meaning."

Another nun, Dorothée Perdreau, gives a touching little story of her brother, and how Mère Angélique sent him sufficient money for the purchase of some post which he wished to obtain in order to marry. Poor Dorothée added, "He died eighteen months afterwards, through a strange accident, and left no children. All his estate was lost and his appointment, for which no compensation was made." She goes on to speak of the kindness and courtesy with which her brother was received at Port Royal when he paid her a visit, how M. d'Andilly "put him up" and looked after him.

"He went away overjoyed with satisfaction at the kindness with which he had been treated, and he used to say, 'Sister, which of us is the more indebted to Port Royal? we owe to it all our peace and happiness.'" Mère Angélique absolutely forbade Dorothée to say anything about money matters to her brother.

Another Sister says: "She could not endure speculative questionings on the mysteries of the faith. She said it was to some extent lowering God's work, if we wished to argue and discuss matters so far above the measure of our reason, and that we must limit our curiosity by what the Gospels told us: God had a reason for not willing to let man be told, and it was for us to adore these mysteries in silence with a deep awe, for there is more disproportion between God and us than between the most learned man on earth and a fly. She preferred us to speak at Conferences concerning salvation, for example; the needful conduct for becoming a good religious, for becoming very humble, very silent,

very prompt in one's duty. She recommended a faithfulness in the smallest things, and she said there is nothing small in Religion, because all is done for God."

Here are some words on sadness :—

"Let us beware of falling into discouragement and sadness. We must never think that the sorrow which we ought to have for our faults should serve as a motive for falling into despair; on the contrary, that godly sorrow ever preserves joy in the depth of the heart, and that joy gives us peace. It never causes uneasiness or anxiety—so be brave, let us forget the past, and begin afresh to do well."

One Sister tells us that when she was much distressed because she was unable to practise austerities, Mère Angélique said to her :

"My child, it is self-love which makes you unhappy about this. Don't you know that there is no better penance than that which God Himself lays on us. We must learn to bear our cross in the way that God wills, and to bear it joyfully without vexation or distress, but in the fullness of our heart; and our weakness will be as pleasing to God as are the austerities of our Sisters, possibly even more because there is less self-love. For it is self-deceit to wish to do what we cannot do, when we neglect what we can do with the help of God's grace.

"If you are more feeble than other people, be also more humble. If your weakness compels you to take more care of yourself and to treat yourself with more indulgence than do the others, humiliate yourself in obedience to that rule which is more necessary than any.

"Above all, be heedful to receive every kindness done you, not as things which are your dues, but as a poor person receives charity with much gratitude.

"Try to make up for not keeping the rule in all its exactness, by your humility, your silence, and your 'recollection.'"

To another Sister who was telling the Mother of spiritual trials, Mère Angélique said :—

"All these things are mountains of difficulty, which only the power of grace can throw into the sea."

To another, who disliked changing her confessor :—

". . . We should on the contrary have regard only to the true Priest, Jesus Christ, whom we have offended, who sees our faults and who only requires in order to forgive us for them, a humble and sincere confession, with sorrow for having been so faithless to Him.

". . . If, when you cannot see M. Singlin, you believe that God commands this delay so that you may go with true humility and sincerity to some one else, you will receive from that priest's ministry more grace than you have ever received up till now from the ministry of M. Singlin."

Madeleine de Sainte Agnès de Ligny has written down some instructions given to a Sister, probably Soeur Madeleine herself, on the return to Port Royal des Champs.

The following contains an epitome of Mère Angélique's general advice to her nuns (in illness) :—

"When we feel weak in virtue, and that we do not practise sufficiently that restraint and prudence which are suitable to an invalid, we must call to mind our weakness as often as possible, for we only realise sicknesses of the soul by remembering them, and there is no guarantee against falling except by an inward retreat, removing ourselves from anything which weakens us, and through self-restraint in all circumstances, remembering our own weakness, humiliating ourselves and remembering God, invoking His Presence, praying for His Help, and so obtaining a constant sense of that Presence that nothing may be done or said unworthy of His Majesty.

"The cure for our souls is to restrain ourselves as much as may be, in deep lowliness before God ; to consider ourselves so poor and weak that we can do nothing except by His Grace and the might of His Spirit ; to listen always to those about us, and defer to them as much as possible ; not to make advances to others except with much prudence and mistrust of self; never to desire to influence other people.

"We must try to busy ourselves with the things God has committed to us, and reverence every circumstance as being ordered by His divine providence. We must

try to be silent, only speaking when it is needful or useful, and to discover before speaking if necessity or edification demands speech, and even then not to speak too much. . . . We must examine ourselves afterwards, to see if we made no mistake, or if we have not spoken too much, and if so we must humiliate ourselves and pray for God's forgiveness.

"We must not, unless positively obliged, speak about ourselves, or of our own advantages, nor of those of our relations, nor of those of our neighbours and acquaintances, nor of what we have seen in the world, . . . nor of what we have heard outside, nor of what goes on in the monastery, nothing which is simply idle speech, since our Lord tells us that we must give account for every idle word. . . .

"We must frequently contemplate our Lord sitting on the right hand of God, as our Mediator and Saviour. Contemplate Him, in hope and confidence, as one of His elect. Think of what God has done for us in this respect: 'Omnia propter electos.'

"Let us pray to God often, in the sighing of our hearts, for there is no other remedy for all our ills, and all our secret covetousness, except to lay them bare to His mercy. Let us despise all temporal things.

"In the Gospel, which tells us of our Lord's hiding in the Temple, we have a great example of only occupying ourselves with what God wishes from us, of seeking Jesus Christ only, without hurrying or fretting about anything. St Ambrose says that the Blessed Virgin was reproved by her Son, in that she was still seeking Him from the human side; she ought to have worshipped and submitted herself to God in her Son's absence and not have grieved herself about it. As it was not permitted even to the Virgin to labour about such a holy thing, about what shall we be allowed to worry and fret ourselves?"

Mère Angélique was re-elected Abbess for the third time in 1648, and while she was at Port Royal de Paris for the election she had the joy of welcoming back to the Community Marie des Anges, who had been Abbess at Maubuisson for some twenty years, and who had at last obtained permission to resign her dignities and return to her true home. Marie des

Anges was a true child of Mère Angélique, filled with her spirit. What M. Singlin was to St Cyran, Marie des Anges was to Mère Angélique; she is, as Sainte Beuve says, of the first generation of Port Royal.

Marie des Anges had been sent to Maubuisson at the special instance of Madame de Longueville,[1] in succession to that lady's half-sister, Mme. de Soissons, who followed Angélique, and who had relaxed the rule to a considerable extent. Marie des Anges, during the twenty years in which she ruled Maubuisson, was utterly faithful to the Port Royal ideals, the Port Royal methods.

She had an extraordinary gift for winning souls, and it was granted her to win over some of the old recalcitrant Sisters who had held out against Mère Angélique. The particular confidante of Madame D'Estrées with whom Angélique had had the memorable struggle, a nun described as a "fille perdue," named "De la Serre," was still at Maubuisson when Marie des Anges arrived. She was the terror of the other Sisters, through her violent temper. But, according to the story told in the *Histoire de Port Royal*, De la Serre was converted apparently quite suddenly by the Mother's prayers, and lived for two years in very real penitence. Mme. de Longueville, who happened to pay a visit to the Monastery soon after this change, could scarcely believe her eyes or ears, and observed to the Abbess that she was working miracles, to which Marie returned the obvious but intensely real answer, "C'est Dieu qui fait tout."

Marie des Anges was, like her great spiritual mother Angélique, an excellent administrator, and for twenty years laboured for the good of the villages which were the property of the Abbey.

But after twenty years she longed to lay down her charge and return to Port Royal. Her friend (and to some extent her protector), the Duchesse de Longueville, was dead; she had had a good deal of difficulty in

[1] The first wife of that Duc de Longueville, whose second wife was Condé's sister, *our* Madame de Longueville.

preventing the Duke from forcing on her as coadjutor Abbess his natural daughter, a mere girl, who had been brought up at Maubuisson, and professed, much against the Abbess's wishes.

Marie laid down her burden in the same spirit in which she had taken it up. She wrote to Mère Angélique for advice, and was told to pray much, but that a successor could be found. This was Suzanne du Saint Esprit de Roche, whom we remember long ago at Port Royal, and who was now an Abbess of another monastery.[1] The formalities were accomplished, permission was obtained from Rome, and to the bitter grief of the nuns, Marie des Anges left Maubuisson and arrived at Port Royal de Paris the same day. The first thing she did was to give up to Mère Angélique every scrap of private property which she possessed, and to beg that she might be sent among the novices, to learn to obey. She was indeed allowed to go to the novices, but not as one of them; she was to aid Agnès Arnauld, who was their Mistress.

Mère Angélique said of her: "She is truly blessed, for she was called by God to the office of an Abbess. But I was laid under a curse when men, not God, made me Abbess and I was blessed by the monks of Cîteaux."

It is tempting to give some of Agnès Arnauld's letters here—a few extracts must suffice.

Writing to a Sister who had asked advice as to distraction in prayer, Agnès says:—

"About prayer, it is more difficult to keep our minds fixed. When no thoughts occur to us, it is better to say from time to time vocal prayers, such as *Veni Creator*, *Ave Maria*, verses of Psalms, which you know, and which will give you devotion; then remain quietly a little while before God and say to Him: Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth. One day you will throw yourself at His feet like the Syro-Phœnician woman, and ask Him for the crumbs which fall from His table, that they may feed your soul; another day

[1] Lieu Dieu at Beaune.

you will be as the centurion, and entreat Him to say only one word to heal your soul; another time you will pray Him, as the Samaritan woman prayed, that He would give you living water which will take away all thirst for anything but Him. You must use every kind of means in order to rouse your mind and your heart to the knowledge and love of God above all things. If you meditate in silence God will reward you by giving you holy thoughts, and the deprivation of conversation with created beings will incline you to intercourse with God. I pray Him, dear Sister, to grant you this grace."

A little earlier she writes to one of her nieces :—

"You must not be surprised if your thoughts of God are only passing thoughts and your distractions lasting, for these last are our own, and the others are sent from God to us, who depend on His good pleasure; that is why we must receive them with deep humility, and bear to be deprived of them in that same lowliness of mind, which causes us to confess that we do not deserve His visits to our hearts, which are so often full of vain thoughts, vain wishes, vain preoccupations, cold and destitute of any love worthy of Him.

"And about the special grace of your profession, I think our Lord certainly allows you to speak of it with joy; only it seems to me it should always be traced back to its source, which is the first union you have with the Son of God by Baptism, and no doubt that is the most intimate union; it may supply every other way of being united with God, but the place of it cannot be supplied by any other."

Agnès writes to another Sister :—

"It is really a great privilege to be ill, for illnesses are called visits of God. . . . Everything we do to attract God to oneself, is very often interrupted and imperfect; and illness removes the obstacles which we bring in the way of God's work. . . .

"It is true that illness prevents us from thinking and occupying our minds, but it is enough to remember sometimes that God sees us, and that we are the objects of His pity if we suffer with an entire submission to His will."

There are various little personal touches in Agnès's letters. She refers to the profession of Marie de Sainte Madeleine du Fargis in 1640; we shall meet her again in the dark days of Port Royal.

The following is from a letter of Mère Angélique. She is writing to one of the Port Royal nuns :—

"Do not be surprised, dearest Sister, at the bitterness of soul in which it pleases God that you should be. Remember that the Sacrifice of the Holy Altar, to the honour of which you wish to dedicate yourself, was preceded by the bloody sacrifice of the Cross. For if it was instituted before, it was only so to speak in advance, as we have been taught. It is right then that your offering should be painful, and that you should accept this suffering, and the attendant circumstances. I hope our Lord will be glorified in them. He has swallowed up death in victory. The ways of God are incomprehensible and adorable."

For a very little time the Community had peace. The "Solitaires," some of whom had been obliged for want of room sorrowfully to retire to Paris, were able soon to come back, as some houses were built for them near the farm called "Les Granges," to which M. Le Maître and M. de Séricourt had retired. Antoine Arnauld, who was living in partial concealment, became one of the confessors to the Port Royal nuns.

After their return to Port Royal, Angélique did all she could to help the poor, but she was more prudent than our own William Law, who tried so hard to follow the way of perfection and succeeded in demoralising his whole neighbourhood. Mère Angélique persuaded the excellent physician M. Pallu to act the part of, as it were, an agent of a Charity Organisation Society, and to find out for her who were deserving objects of charity.

CHAPTER VII

THE SCHOOLS OF PORT ROYAL (1638-1653)

PORT ROYAL is associated inseparably with an educational movement. And this movement is due to the master mind of St Cyran. Already we have seen how deeply imbued he was with love for children, and care for their good education and nurture. He saw with that keen eye of his, that the true vocation for Lancelot was that of a teacher, and Claude Lancelot's and also Fontaine's first employment was teaching. A few children were gathered together at Port Royal de Paris, and afterwards at Port Royal des Champs. Yet the whole period of this educational work lasted only about fifteen years, and was often disturbed.

The first beginnings were made with St Cyran's nephews and two sons of M. Bignon, and to these were added a young son of M. d'Andilly and the son of St Cyran's dear friend, Mme. de Saint Ange. And we have seen how the young Thomas Fossé and his brother were sent by their parents to Port Royal in 1643. Lancelot was not there just then; the masters were M. de Séricourt and M. de Bascle.

For a short time, owing to the first mutterings of the storm which was occasioned by Antoine Arnauld's book, *De la Fréquente Communion*, the boys were sent to a country-house belonging to a Port Royal friend, M. des Touches, but they returned to Port Royal, and Lancelot came from Paris to direct their studies. More children came, and the school was removed to Paris and regularly established there. Four masters directed their studies, Lancelot, Nicole, Guyot, Coustel, and each of these had six boys under his special charge.

The Superior, or headmaster, was M. Wallon de Beaupuis, a very beautiful example of what Port Royal produced in the way of both piety and learning. His most celebrated pupils were M. de Tillemont, the ecclesiastical historian, and the poet Racine. Many more might be mentioned: oddly enough the Duke of Monmouth spent a little time at Chesnai, near Versailles, where a few boys were collected by M. de Bernières. If only these plans of serious, solid education had been spared, what numbers of grave, austere young Frenchmen might have grown up in France, somewhat the sort of persons whom Dr Arnold of Rugby was supposed to send out into the world, with the additional advantage of being Catholics.

Probably *Les Petites Ecoles*, from the accounts we read of the politeness and decorum which were inculcated in them, turned out youths more courteous and gracious than were the shy and desperately in earnest Rugbeians of Arnold's day. But Dr Arnold and the Port Royal masters, Lancelot, De Beaupuis, and the rest, were alike in their lofty moral purpose, their desire to build up character, to send boys out into Oxford and Paris, among a corrupt generation, to shine as lights. Perhaps no worse service was ever done to the cause of Christian education than the destruction of the Port Royal Schools. No one wishes to dispute the services which the Jesuits have rendered to education; but there are other ideals and other methods besides those of the Society, and it seems a misfortune to make the lover of France and of French religion gnash his teeth, that this one Order should have so completely dominated the Western Church.

For four years the schools (*Petites Ecoles* was their modest title) were prosperous, although they were not in good repute in high places.

Mère Angélique wrote to the Queen of Poland:—

"*February* 1645.

"To the Queen of Poland.

"The Queen [Anne of Austria] has been made to believe that in the house of Des Touches—a

young man of twenty-seven, who has a good deal of property and has only kept enough on which to live quietly, having given the remainder away—in this house, I repeat, she has been told, are forty men all brought up in heresy. In addition, it has been reported of another house, to which some children were sent who had been at Port Royal with five excellent young men who educated them [Lancelot, Nicole, M. Wallon de Beaupuis, were of this band], that it was a Community, that no one ever went out, that the boys were all dressed alike, that they had a chapel, and were called the Little Brothers of Grace. In order to mend all these disorders, M. le Lieutenant Civil was sent to inspect these houses. He was not a little surprised to find that all he had been told was absolutely untrue; and he said to these gentlemen that they had enemies who spread evil reports about . . . All this does not tend to our quietness of mind . . . . But, after all, nothing will happen except what God pleases; and what pleases God ought to please us."

The life led by Port Royal boys was carefully regulated and had a due admixture of play and work, and much, but not overmuch, attendance at the Offices of Religion. Young boys, for instance, were not sent to Mass very frequently in the week. But there was, as M. de Sainte Beuve points out, a peculiar "ethos" about Port Royal schools. What was it? The aim of the Port Royalists was simply to preserve Baptismal innocence.

M. de Sainte Marthe wrote:—

"There is only too much reason to deplore the sight of children of Christians who show almost no sign of their Baptismal grace . . . . they have their minds closed to spiritual things and cannot understand them; but, on the other hand, they have their eyes open to evil; their senses are liable to every kind of corruption."

He goes on to describe how at school the children are practically left to themselves, and "the sheep are forsaken by their pastors; they become the prey of wolves . . . . no one cares for them, for there is nothing

in the world which excites people's interest so little as the loss of souls." Sad words, but true, as many an English public schoolboy could testify. Sainte Marthe tells us how St Cyran was consumed by a fervent love for the tender souls of children.

M. de Beaupuis tells us :—

"This is what the masters tried to do who were in charge of these children . . . they were to watch continually over the little troop, never losing them from sight, and considering them as a precious trust for which God would assuredly demand a terrible reckoning.

"They should carry them in their hearts and offer them to God incessantly, to draw on them His blessings and His grace. They should try to seize every opportunity which presented itself for giving them salutary instructions. They should adapt themselves to the children's weakness. They should bear with them in their infirmities with patience, and they should never cease to wait on them. . . . They should make it plain how full of snares and of dangers the world is [this is very characteristic of Port Royal]; that Christians should use it, as not abusing it; and that, in order to overcome the world, we must care neither for greatness, riches, or pleasures."

Very little corporal punishment was allowed. St Cyran himself had in early days laid down as a principle that the rod should be used only for very grave faults—a great contrast with the ideas then in vogue on the subject.

Fontaine gives us a touching account of the tenderness and reasonableness of M. de Saci's views on children :—

"He often recommended me not to be too strict, and not to get too uneasy; . . . that it was needful to be content if one could check grave faults by closing one's eyes to others, even if they did not seem tiny faults; that one must cure these little by little and very much by degrees; that one must be for ever loving, otherwise one would kill oneself, and do them no good.

"He was never tired of advising delay in warnings and reproofs; for by omitting mention of some faults,

one could cure others; one could easily set any small disorders right by a few words; for God always made one know when it was time to speak to them; one could only get to know the little ones by adapting oneself to them and by suiting oneself to their minds. If we did not do this, the children would not receive our words of advice."

Wonderfully wise and tender words, which might well be pondered by modern parents and teachers.

Patience and silence, M. de Saci went on to say, were two great qualities for the teacher to cherish in himself.

To teach the children to correspond with grace was the great, the ruling principle of Port Royal. Man's helplessness without grace and the need of co-operation with grace, this mysterious union, was for ever insisted on. As Sainte Beuve says, here is no fatalism. We can do nothing without God's grace, but we must co-operate with it.

Some years after the dispersion of the Port Royal schools, one of the masters published a book on the education of children, in which he discusses the different methods of education. He, like other Port Royalists, and especially St Cyran, prefers to bring up a few boys in the neighbourhood of a religious house, so that the example of an austere and self-surrendered life might be ever in view, and yet in the house itself the atmosphere should be one of home.

This was the ideal of Port Royal: an innocent, happy boyhood spent under the care of a Christian scholar, whose aim it should be to turn out Christian scholars.

For actual teaching it is well known that Port Royal was renowned. Especially Lancelot's method of learning Greek and Latin, and the *Grammaire Générale et Raisonée* of which Lancelot and Arnauld were the authors, were real innovations. Latin and Greek were taught through the medium of French.[1] To Port

[1] Greek had almost ceased to be taught in French colleges. The Port Royal schools, thanks chiefly to M. Wallon de Beaupuis, made it one of the principal subjects.

Royal belongs the honour of having brought literary education up to the level of the advance and growth which made the seventeenth century so marked a period in the history of French literature.

The most celebrated of all the books which proceeded from Port Royal was the celebrated Port Royal Logic; *La Logique, ou l'Art de Penser, contenant outre les Règles Communes, plusieurs Observations nouveaux propre à former le Jugement*, is the somewhat cumbersome title of the best known of Port Royal manuals.

The joint authors, of the first three of the four parts into which the book is divided, were Arnauld and Nicole. Arnauld is the sole author of Part IV. Arnauld was, however, the real author so far as the original thought of the Logic is concerned.

It is extraordinarily clear, and shows the influence of Descartes, to whose philosophy Arnauld, and in consequence Port Royal, was strongly inclined.

Sainte Beuve points out that the type of scholar which it was the design of the book to form was the Christian; not simply a learned man or a pure logician, but a Christian. The book is resonant with that lofty tone of perfect independence of great people which is so distinguishing a characteristic of Port Royal.

It is curious to find theology introduced into a work on logic. In Part I., chap. xv., there is a dissertation as to the Real Presence in the Eucharist. Arnauld had already been engaged in correspondence with Descartes on this subject, and perhaps it is with a lasting desire to vindicate the orthodoxy of his logic and the Cartesian philosophy that he expounds the doctrine in the chapter entitled, "Of ideas which the mind adds to those which are expressly signified by words."

The Logic is in four parts, of which only Part IV. is purely Arnauld's; he and Nicole (of whom more later) collaborated in the first three. It is in four divisions, preceded by two preliminary discussions, and these divisions correspond to the four chief operations of the mind—"concevoir, juger, raisonner, ordonner," of

ideas, propositions, syllogism, and lastly on method. The second title of the book, *L'Art de Penser*, really describes its purpose. It did a great deal to make logic metaphysical and ethical, and it cleared away much of the barbarism and technicalities which had hitherto darkened knowledge. Above all, Arnauld substitutes his native tongue in place of a dead one.

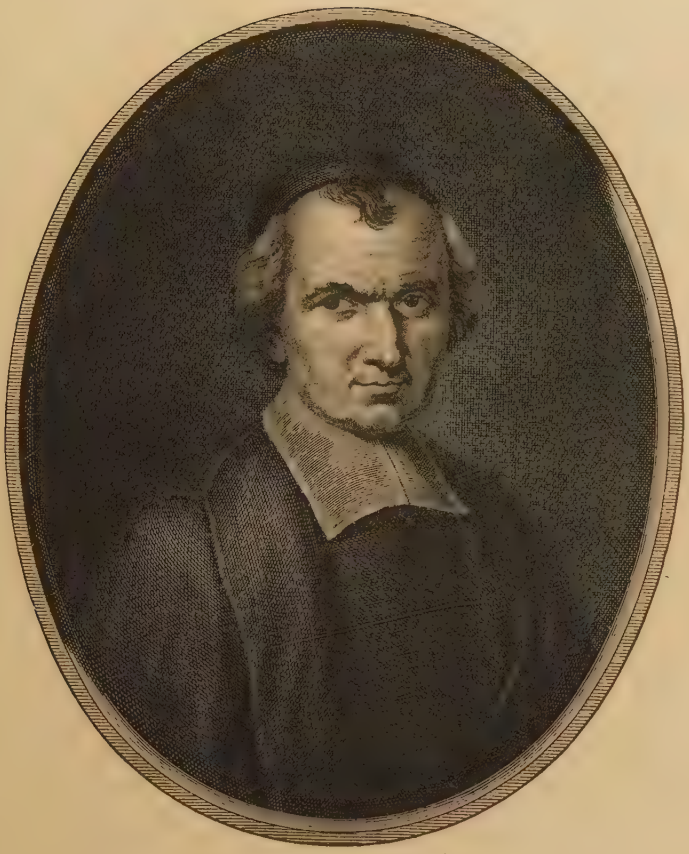
It is tempting to quote passages from Part IV., so full as it is of that prudent, moderate, high-toned, ethical spirit of the best Port Royalists. Once only did Arnauld forget moderation, and then it was to launch himself at Montaigne, in the same chapter in which occurs a fine passage on "too much speaking of oneself."

Montaigne, one of the few authors whom Pascal really studied, is the very antithesis of the stern Arnauld, who was really incapable of doing him justice, and whose repugnance and detestation of Montaigne seem to burst out in spite of himself.

Part III. is pleasanter reading. Here the influence of Descartes is clearly seen.

All systems of philosophy have their day, and other schools of thought have succeeded to the Cartesian. It has been rediscovered by non-Catholics that St Thomas Aquinas and Albertus Magnus were giants of intellect, and that St Thomas is after all the champion of rational religion. Time brings many changes, and Albertus, Aquinas, Anselm, can no longer be dismissed by any educated person with the lofty contempt bestowed on them by such writers as George Henry Lewes and Macaulay.

Now Antoine Arnauld, as F. D. Maurice pointed out, never felt the need of the reconciliation between philosophy and theology. Such men play a great part and have their special vocation, but they can never build up the truth or bring out the real harmony which lies latent in the Creed with all that is rich and true and permanent in human thought. The chilly atmosphere of Cartesianism was perhaps as fatal to Arnauld



Antoine Arnauld.

as was Locke's system to English theology. Only for a time, however; and in later years, later thinkers have taken up the ever-recurring task, and have set forth in noble words and in varying manners, the truth of the interdependence of theology and metaphysics.[1]

[1] See Moberly's *Reason and Religion.*

CHAPTER VIII

"LA FRÉQUENTE COMMUNION" (1643)

ANTOINE ARNAULD'S book, which produced an extraordinary storm of controversy, appeared in 1643, very shortly before M. de St Cyran's death, and we must go back a little in point of time to consider it. It is the first work which emanated from Port Royal, and was, as it were, the first manifesto, the first book stamped with the impress of the Port Royal thought, breathing the Port Royal spirit. It was a setting forth of that which was the very essence of all that is meant by the teaching of Port Royal—true repentance, the need of correspondence with grace, the danger of unworthy reception.

A strange little bit of social history seems to have been the *raison d'être* of the book. Two ladies, both known in Port Royal history, were in 1643 under different directors. The Princess de Guémenée, who just then was under St Cyran's guidance, refused to go to a ball on the day when she made her Communion. Madame de Sablé, of whom we shall speak later, had a Jesuit confessor, and made no objection to such a proceeding.

A discussion ensued, and a letter from the Jesuit confessor fell into M. Antoine Arnauld's hands. It contained the kernel of the whole argument: "Plus on est denué de grace, plus on doit hardiment s'approcher de Jésus-Christ dans l'Eucharistie."

Nothing can well be more opposed to the spirit of St Cyran and all the Port Royalists than this crude statement. Arnauld set himself to refute it, and as

M. de Sainte Beuve says, no book of devotion made so great a sensation since the appearance of *La Vie Dévote*. Certainly the *Vie Dévote* has had a longer life than Antoine's rather ponderous and stiff volume, which nevertheless is full of interest and of striking passages which seem oddly and delightfully in accordance with the teaching of our best Anglican writers. It is not, however, one of the most attractive books to read, of the many controversial works which have been written on the Blessed Sacrament of Love. Antoine's method is to state his adversary's position, and then to demolish him ; he writes exactly as if he were stating a proposition of Euclid ; his lucidity, his logical severity, his well-balanced style are all there, but the effect on a modern reader is sometimes that of revulsion from such a method of treating such a question. But—there was a cause.

The easy-going, lax, low view of religious life shocked the moral sense, the lofty ideal, the reverence for God's Law which were the natural inheritance of all who drank from the clear well of Port Royal teaching. And the very dryness, the logical cast into which Arnauld framed his book, appealed to the religious world.

But, as one reads the *Fréquente Communion*, one feels that surely no rules can be laid down, that Repentance and Conversion to God are still the fundamental truths, and that no one who can argue about, or calculate on, the possibility of himself falling into mortal sin, getting out of it again, and repeating the process, can possibly have been converted. "O my God, let me rather die than sin wilfully," has been put into our lips by a saint of the English Church, and that represents a state of mind to which we hope to attain.

Arnauld's views seem to be fairly shown by the following extract from his preface, in which, by the way, he deals very faithfully with his Jesuit opponent :—

"So that if it is a great sin to approach this Holy Table, this awful sacrifice (to quote the Fathers),

without the needful correspondence of heart and mind for so divine and holy an action, it is no less a sin to neglect the task of making oneself worthy to approach, unless one is cut off by the command of the Canons and of the Church. I do not know which of the two cases is most to be condemned.

"One man makes himself guilty of the Body and Blood of the Son of God by profane reception; another makes that Body and Blood of no avail for him, because he desecrates his soul and refuses to receive. One, as the apostle says, eats and drinks his own condemnation, not discerning the Lord's Body and treating it as common food; the other despises his Judge by neglecting to prepare his soul for feeding on the Divine food which is offered him. The one is condemned in the Gospel in the person of him who came to the marriage feast of the king's son without a wedding garment and was cast into outer darkness. The other is like those who refused to go to the feast to which they were invited, and of whom Jesus Christ says, that these shall never taste His banquet; that is, they shall never enter Paradise."

Arnauld's position seems quite unassailable that, "the Eucharist is so Divine and comfortable a thing to them who receive it worthily, and so dangerous to them that presume to receive it unworthily"; he felt, as the same exhortation goes on to say, that he must urge his readers to consider "the dignity of that holy mystery."

But Arnauld goes on to discuss the question: in order to be in a fit state to receive Holy Communion, is it sufficient not to have a mortal sin on the conscience?

This chapter, "Partie III., chap viii.," is very interesting. He speaks of the terrible dangers of self-deceit, of the necessity of enlightening the conscience. The following passage deserves to be quoted:—

"Certainly one must be strangely blind, if one is not touched by one's own experience, and if one never experiences the least fear that all one's confessions and one's Communions may be acts of sacrilege; if we

see that they have resulted in no amendment of life. For since the Sacraments never fail to produce their effect when they are rightly received, if we see in ourselves no sign of these effects, but on the contrary something wholly opposed to grace, are we not blind, filled with darkness, if we do not realise it is our own failure to correspond with the Sacraments, which arrests the access of spiritual strength, and prevents the waters of life from flowing in upon the soul? As one of the principal effects of the Eucharist is to give us strength against the assaults of our enemies, and to provide us with a heavenly antidote, which protects us against being again infected by mortal sin, as we are taught by the Council of Trent: then do we not deceive ourselves, by persuading ourselves that our Communions are fruitful, if we never feel any fresh strength and if we fall very easily into sin?"

Again Arnauld speaks of the abiding effect of Holy Communion:—

"We have only to consider that the Saviour does not say of him who eats His Flesh and drinks His Blood, he *is* in Me, and I am in him, but he *abides* in Me, and I in him. 'In me manet, et ego in eo.'

"From which we learn without difficulty, since every word of our Lord is to be carefully weighed, that the effect of the Eucharist is not that our Lord comes to us in a passing visitation, but that He establishes His dwelling in the soul, that He takes possession of it and dominates it, that He makes it to be His Palace, and His Kingdom; He dwells in it and reigns in it."

This is in direct accordance with the teaching of the best Anglican theologians. I will only quote a passage from Bishop Gore's book, *The Body of Christ*:—

"The coming of Christ to the Christian through Holy Communion is in Roman theology and books of devotion spoken of as a temporary visit which, though certain fruits remain, is yet in its primary sense, as an indwelling of Christ, over when the digestion of the material food begins—it is suggested after a quarter of

an hour. 'This day,' so devotion is taught to express itself,

"'My Lord
Came to my lowly tenement
And stayed awhile with me.'"

Or—

"'Oh, when wilt Thou always
Make our hearts Thine own?
We must wait for heaven,
Then the day will come.'"

"Now such an idea of a temporary visit of Christ to the soul is in most marked contradiction to the teaching of the undivided Church. 'He is held for a moment in your hands, but He is wholly resolved into your heart,' says St Chrysostom. 'What you see in the Sacrament,' says St Augustine, 'passes away, but the invisible thing signified does not pass away, but remains.' The whole teaching of the Fathers on the subject seems indeed to be a loving commentary upon our Lord's words about His abiding in us and we in Him.'"[1]

But there is much more agreement than would appear; take this passage from Father Dalgairns' book on Holy Communion:—

"This, then . . . is the permanent effect of the Holy Eucharist; it is the union of the very soul of Jesus with ours, not in figure but in reality . . . In proportion as our old human life disappears before His influence, human views and feelings vanish away, and the thoughts and desires of Jesus are substituted for them. Instead of the love of ease comes the thirst for suffering; instead of selfishness, a self-devoted zeal and a tender pity like that of Jesus, who alone is living within us, while our old self is dead."

Arnauld has been charged with extra severity and rigour, in no measured terms. The book does not seem to warrant so much opprobrium. It is one thing to follow the Lord's example of tenderness and compassion to sinners who are *outside*, to those who do not know Him. It is a totally different thing to lower the standard of Christian discipleship. We have seen how

[1] *The Body of Christ*, p. 122.

tender Mère Angélique was with sinners, with the ignorant and them that were "out of the way," and how keen and unsparing she was with herself and those who she knew were desirous to follow in Christ's steps. Surely it is of no use, at any time, to persuade people that to be a Christian involves no pain, no self-sacrifice, no parting with the very dearest treasure. Christians are led on from strength to strength, but at no time of the spiritual life can it be possible to be *of* the world and yet to be Christ's disciple. For Christ, so tender, so compassionate to the multitude, so loving to His disciples, had a very exacting standard for those disciples. Our Lord does expect a great deal from those whom He calls His friends, those to whom He gives no less a gift than Himself.

Surely this is the mistake often made by writers of every age. They take the warnings to the Pharisees and the tender words to the sinners, and forget that there was and is another class into which sinners may come if they will—*His Friends.* The Holy Communion is surely meant for the disciples, for the converted, the self-surrendered. The Church and the world are so hopelessly entangled that it is difficult to see where one begins and the other ends, but in the early days when persecution was the great sifter, and to be a member of the Church might cost one one's life, there was little need to warn people against worldliness, and the Blessed Sacrament often was the daily food of the Church.

There is no question of rules. The particular point which gave rise to the book could be decided in different ways by different people. The principle is "in the Lord." A ball even at Louis XIV.'s Court might be attended by one person as a matter of duty; one can quite see that for another a period of quiet and retreat was absolutely needful before and after Communion, and that a third might be obliged to withdraw from all such amusements.

The controversy was—not this or that petty detail, but—whether after all our Lord's words meant any-

thing when He said, "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon."[1]

This is what is always happening in every age. Occasionally it becomes easy to be outwardly religious. Devotion became quite "selon les règles" in France in the seventeenth century, and it is the unfortunate habit of many religious people to accommodate Christ's religion to the particular demands made by fashionable society on the leaders of religion. In every age it is the same—laxity of moral standards in our own age as in "Le Siècle de Louis XIV."; love of money, comfort, as in England at the time of the Evangelical Revival, and so on. And always some are raised up by God to protest. Port Royal was, as we have seen, the voice crying out for spiritual religion; and Arnauld's book was the Manual of the Port Royalists. The Jesuits at once declared themselves against *La Fréquente Communion.* One of the Company delivering a course of sermons took occasion to denounce it, to the great surprise of his hearers, who saw no particular reason for so much excitement, as the Jesuits were not even mentioned in it.

"There must be something which hasn't come out yet," said the Maréchal de Vitry, "the Fathers are not in such a state of zeal when it's a simple question of the Glory of God." Naturally, *La Fréquente Communion* only sold the faster; the notice of a second edition was fastened to the door of the Jesuit church before Père Nouet's course was finished.

Lancelot tells us that Père Nouet, at first, seeing the book lying on the table of the Archbishop of Tours, took it, skimmed it, and then praised it warmly, not seeing, says Claude ironically, that the credit of the Company, which concerned him more than the cause of God, was at all affected.

The Bishops who had affixed their commendations of the book by no means felt inclined to allow these tergiversations of his to pass, and compelled him to sign a recantation on his knees.

The Jesuits were always quite ready to throw over

[1] See Appendix, Note II.

an inconvenient brother, says M. d'Ormesson. "La facilité qu'ils ont à souffrir ce que leurs Pères écrivent est pareille à celle de les désavouer s'ils ne sont pas bien reçus."

It is needless to say that the Company of Jesus did not submit to this Episcopal snub more meekly than they have ever been accustomed to bend to the authority of Bishops. By various manœuvres they succeeded in persuading Anne of Austria to issue an order to Antoine Arnauld and M. du Barcos (St Cyran's nephew) to go to Rome and give an account of their doctrine. But France was not ultramontane enough to bear this, and the Clergy, the "Parlement," the University, the Theological Faculty, and, above all, the Sorbonne, rose, as one man, to remonstrate on such an unheard-of proceeding. To command any subject of the King of France to defend his works beyond the boundaries of France!

Antoine Arnauld was willing to go to Rome, but he was warned that if he did go he would never return.

The two friends, M. du Barcos and Antoine, retired from the world. The Princess de Gueménée sheltered the first, and Arnauld was taken care of by various friends, "à couvert," says he, "sous l'ombre des ailes de Dieu." The Solitaires did all they could to help him, and De Saci particularly tried to tone down Arnauld's strong language and vehement replies to his adversaries. Sainte Beuve says: "Ainsi commença pour lui cette vie de labeur et de combat dans la fuite, dans la persécution, cette guerre de plume du fond des asiles."[1]

Mère Angélique's own letters to him on his retirement deserve quotation.

"A. M. Arnauld le Docteur.

"If you could see, my dearest Father, what is in my heart and mind, you would know that day and night I am continually thinking of you; and although it is not without deep feelings of affection and of grief

[1] *Histoire de Port Royal*, vol. ii., p. 188.

for our separation, nevertheless the perception I have of the great, the peculiar grace that God gives us in suffering for truth and in trying to minister to the souls which He has purchased by His Blood, overcomes all my feelings; so that I think willingly only of the extreme and burning desire I have that you should bear this trial in a Christian and holy manner, so that by bearing persecution in this way, you may teach the faithful the way of penitence, more worthily than you have taught it in theory by your book. I know, my very dear Father, that you wish this, but in such stormy trials our souls are often distracted; and the malicious spirit, who is more on the alert than ever to snatch from us fruits which such rare and important opportunities should produce, tries to distract us. You have one great happiness which few afflicted people have, you have so many who watch over you, . . . so that you need only pray to God and offer yourself incessantly as a sacrifice to His glory and the good of His Church.

"Divine Providence has willed that your suffering should begin in the days when the Church commemorates the Suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ: I say 'begin,' for I do not see when it will end. But in proportion as it is long, so you will be happy. I should be too happy if I might be with you and wait on you. We will always do so in spirit with more affection than I can express.

"All our Sisters say the same, not only the five [Arnaulds] but all the others who are also converted and with all their hearts pray for you. I am your daughter, your sister, and your mother. May our Lord Jesus Christ be your strength, your hope, your rest, and your only love; may He dwell in your mind wholly, and separate it from earthly things. Forgive my extreme affection. Mother Agnès sends you two small books which you can always carry about with you, as she fears you may not conveniently carry a breviary; so you will have [in these] the chief part. I entreat you to pray as often as you can, and to ask from God my conversion."

A little later she says:—

"I dare to entreat you, my dear one, never to take up your pen or put it down without prayer. I am sure you do so; but as I notice that my hastiness makes me often omit it even in my most important actions, I fear

the same may happen to you. I must also beg you to read the New and the Old Testament every day; for I always am afraid that you do not know Holy Scripture sufficiently, and that your numerous occupations may make you forget to read it. Now it seems to me that you ought no more to omit giving this holy food to your soul than food to your body; no work, however pressing, may dispense you from that."

Shortly after his retirement Arnauld published a sort of Apologia, in the form of a *Déclaration en forme de Testament des véritables dispositions de mon âme dans toutes les rencontres importants de ma vie.* In this he justifies his position at some length. He maintains that God forgives sins to the converted, and he explains what he means by false penitents in terms which one would think would be acceptable to all Catholics. "Those are miserably deceived who think they can be good Christians at intervals of days or hours, and whose life is in addition a continual round of sins and confessions."

As Sainte Beuve says, the teaching of *La Fréquente Communion* is approved by any and all who take Christianity at all seriously, however prejudiced they may be against Jansenism.

The storm raised by *La Fréquente Communion* fell to some extent on Port Royal. In 1644 a visitation was ordered and carried out, with the result that the Archbishop of Paris wrote to the Superior that his visitors had found only piety and virtue in the House.

Agnès writes to Antoine Arnauld: "There is a proof that God's mercy and grace will follow us as they have gone before us and with us: it will be necessary to conclude that good doctrine has been taught us, since no bad doctrine has been found."

It must be noticed, by the way, that the much denounced book has never been condemned at Rome.

CHAPTER IX

THE FRONDE (1649-1653)

THE time of peace which succeeded the return to Port Royal des Champs was broken by the civil war known as the Fronde. Angélique was elected Abbess in October 1646; and she who, as the historian of Port Royal says, had been ever ready to close her guest-room, was now equally ready to open her doors to all who needed shelter. It was a miserable time, the Fronde—so called from the witty remark of one Bachaumont. "Bachaumont took it into his head to say one day jokingly that the Parlement was just like schoolboys who shot with their slings (qui *frondent*) in the Paris gutters, running to get out of the way when the policeman appears, and flocking together when he is no more to be seen."

It was a sudden outburst of the nobles and the *Parlement* of Paris against the power of the King, but it was not a national movement, and the nobles of France were unfit to be the leaders of a popular reform. As one reads the Memoirs of de Retz, or of Madame de Motteville, La Grande Mademoiselle, one is struck with the absence of all real patriotism in any of the leaders, Condé, or De Retz, or any one else.[1] Only in some of the Gens de la Robe, in such people as Mathieu Molé, is there anything corresponding to the sturdy resistance, loyalty to principle, the desire for public good, which flamed in the best Puritans and

[1] See Appendix, Note III.

Cavaliers alike in England. Each was for himself in France, so far as the nobles were concerned. It hardly comes within the scope of this book to describe what Ranke calls the burlesque war of the Fronde, but, briefly, it arose from the resistance of the *Parlement* of Paris to certain oppressive taxes which Emeri, the controller-general or head of all the finances of France, had tried to impose.

Anne of Austria was entirely unable to grasp the situation. For her the *Gens de la Robe* were mere "canaille," and after her order to arrest the leading magistrate had roused the populace to fury, it needed a few words from Henrietta Maria to bring before her the real peril and perplexity of the time. The popular idol of the hour, Broussel, had to be released. Madame de Motteville says: "Jamais triomphe du roi ou d'Empereur Romain n'a été plus grand que celui de ce pauvre petit homme, qui n'avait rien de recommandable que d'être entêté du bien public et de la haine des impôts," words which show how incapable of any comprehension of the needs and miseries of France was any one connected with the Court.

Anne was obliged to yield, and matters went no better when Condé, the great Condé, the popular hero and victorious general, returned; if he disliked the Parlement, he also detested Mazarin, and his support of the Court was remarkably cold.

Then came the Peace of Westphalia, the last act of the Thirty Years' War, scarcely heeded amidst the furious excitements into which the country was plunged.

In fact, Germany was not a very interesting or familiar country to France, nor was the safety of the German Protestants a matter of peculiar interest to the ordinary French Catholic. The diminution of taxation was the burning question. Mazarin secured Condé and the King's uncle, Gaston, Duke of Orleans; the Court took refuge in St Germain, and the deluded Parisians allowed themselves to be the tools of the nobles, who for various causes chose to embrace the side of the *Parlement*.

One of the most fascinating of the great ladies connected with Port Royal, Condé's sister, Madame de Longueville, threw herself into the cause, as did her husband, and her lover, the famous Duc de la Rochefoucauld, author of the well-known maxims. Of her, more later.

By degrees the *Parlement* saw how little could be hoped for from the nobles; how, to quote Dean Kitchin, "no real strength or nobleness lay behind this frivolous bravery and gallantry; the great Cardinal Richelieu had destroyed all that was strong and had debauched the rest, by leaving them position without power."[1]

Through the efforts of Mathieu Molé, the President of the *Parlement*, a temporary peace was signed in 1649. So closed the first war of the Fronde.[2]

Port Royal at Paris and also in the country gave shelter to many wanderers, to refugees from other convents; and in several instances the prejudices which had been excited against Port Royal were considerably modified. Some of the Sisters in Port Royal de Paris were lodged during the disturbances in a house outside the city belonging to a well-known friend of Port Royal, M. de Bernières, *Maître des Requêtes*. A solemn procession of the departing nuns was formed, and they were accompanied to their new home by M. Le Nain, the father of the historian, M. de Tillemont, and by M. de Bernières. In profound silence they departed, many not knowing in the least where they were to go. For a few hours the little troop took refuge in M. de Bernière's house, while their own new abode was being prepared. They said their Hours and sewed diligently as if they were still in their cloister. In the evening they departed, and the chapel was soon arranged, in which M. Singlin often preached. Some, however, were left in the house in the Faubourg St Jacques, for many felt that it would be wrong to leave the house of

[1] *Cf.* Henri Martin, *Histoire de France*, vol. iv.

[2] That the Port Royalists were on the side of the Fronde has always been a favourite accusation, absolutely without foundation, but constantly repeated.

prayer quite deserted. Marie des Anges and Anne Eugénie were of these, and the youngest of the Arnauld sisters, Madeleine.

M. Singlin was also in the house, and all went on quietly and regularly amidst the frequent disturbances. "Holy hands lifted up in prayer continually."

The misery was awful among the peasantry. Angélique writes from Port Royal des Champs :—

"This poor country is in a horrible state, it is perfectly pitiable. The soldiers shelter themselves in farms, make the people thresh the corn, and do not give a grain of it to the wretched masters, who beg for a little by way of charity, that it may be ground. There is no ploughing, there are no more horses, and everything is pillaged.

"God wills that we should learn to live as poor people. We shall be blessed if He gives us the grace to receive *this* grace."

The first war of the Fronde had run its brief course, and for a while peace was restored. De Saci was at last ordained priest at the Ember-tide of December 1648, but with that strange shrinking from holy privileges which the Port Royalists seemed to have carried to excess, he did not celebrate Mass until the Festival of the Conversion of St Paul, 1649. M. Singlin, who had more than enough on his hands just then, wished to entrust the spiritual direction of Port Royal des Champs to M. de Saci. Several people were extremely averse to this idea—Fontaine, for instance, who implored M. Singlin to allow him to continue to resort to Antoine Arnauld, who was, as we know, frequently at Port Royal. Somehow or other M. de Saci's apparent coldness frightened the Solitaires, for he was reserved on principle, and though winningness and graciousness of manner and, above all, the love of God manifesting itself in words and deeds, are more after the manner of the Pastor Pastorum, yet it is an undoubted fact that many spiritual guides have cultivated great reserve and coldness, at any rate in their first relations with their penitents.

M. de Saci was, like St Cyran, a born director. "He was convinced in the very depths of his heart that without God no work could be done in the soul; it was absolutely necessary that He should begin, and pastors should think only of Him without anxiety or marring of His work. Their labour should be to recognise the traces of Him in the soul." There is little of the supposed pride of so-called sacerdotalism here!

M. Le Maître, that holy and humble man of heart, found it extremely difficult to put himself under his brother's direction. Already De Séricourt and Mme. Le Maître had taken him for their director, but it was a difficult task for Antoine Le Maître to yield his will and submit to be guided.

He seems to have dreaded his brother's coldness and to have disliked the reversal of their normal positions.

M. Singlin did not press matters, but after a while he paid a visit to Port Royal, and he and M. Le Maître had a long talk which ended in the complete submission of that lofty, generous soul.

As Singlin left Le Maître, he said :—

"Come, I shall be more and more certain of what God will ask of you and I shall be more at liberty to tell you of it, when you are directed by a more clear sighted person than I. I am now going to the Altar to say Mass, and I shall offer it chiefly as an act of gratitude to God for the grace He has given you, for I feel as if it were given to me, since you needed it to serve Him, and I have wished for it so long." (*Fontaine*, p. 367.)

It is a touching picture, the mother, the brothers kneeling one by one at the feet of the still youthful priest, so grave, apparently so cold, yet so full of wisdom; one of those whom a writer of our own day has thus described :—

"The innocent are those who have been true to the divine ideals, through which in youth the beauty of holiness flashes on the soul, content to take the evil of

the world upon authority till time has shewn them its malignity without imparting its contagion; and therefore able in the end to say, 'I have more understanding than my teachers, for Thy testimonies are my study. I am wiser than the aged; because I keep Thy commandments.'"[1]

There are several such among our Port Royalists, notably Lancelot, Fontaine, and De Saci.

Fontaine goes on to say that all M. Le Maître's dislike vanished away, and in an outburst of brotherly affection he copied out an extract from St Chrysostom, which he called "Le Portrait de l'amitié Chrétienne et spirituelle," which he sent to his severe and austere brother, with a few lines of poetry.

De Saci's reply was anything but cold. Evidently he was touched by the warm affection of M. Le Maître, and he hastened to write to the younger Angélique, daughter of M. d'Andilly, and to enclose Le Maître's little gift.

Port Royal gained many recruits to the band of the Solitaires, and we see the first beginnings of the brief connection which the Abbey had with the great and powerful of this world. The Duc de Luines and his wife resolved to give themselves to a life of prayer and devotion. He and his wife, who was a daughter of the Chancellor Séguier, built a house in the neighbourhood of Port Royal, the Château de Vaumaurier. He was the son of the Connétable de Luines, the favourite of Louis XIII., who died in 1621, and his mother became the Duchesse de Chevreuse, the well-known friend of Anne of Austria, hated by Richelieu and notorious for her intrigues.

The Duke and Duchess built the Château de Vaumaurier only a year before the young Duchess, a girl of twenty-seven, died. She had lived a pure and holy life in the midst of distractions and temptations at the Court, and she seems to have pined for Vaumaurier and for Port Royal. Probably she had been introduced

[1] Illingworth, *University Sermons.*

to Mère Angélique by the Queen of Poland, whose god-daughter she was. She died in her confinement, very soon after receiving a translation of some portions of St Augustine made for her by M. Le Maître. The twins who were born on this sad day, September 13th, 1651, only survived their mother a year; but she left two daughters as well as her son the Duc de Chevreuse, who, with his brother-in-law the Duc de Beauvilliers, were two of Fénelon's most distinguished spiritual children.[1] The son was worthy of his mother.

Mme. de Luines left many notes of resolutions and pious reflections. "We must," said she, "love solitude in order to cure ourselves of our wounds, and we must endure visits so as not to wound our neighbours." She says, in one of her notes, that she gave herself up to the service of God in the great world.

M. Singlin was with her when she was dying. "He divided his loving care between the dying woman and the husband, who was broken-hearted at the unlooked-for loss of his wife." She had written to M. Singlin a few days before, in sorrow for the death of her mother and of her eldest son: "Dieu m'enterre ceux qui faisoient la consolation de ma vie, mais il le doit lui-même tenir lieu de toutes choses." He had helped her and taught her so much, and aided her to overcome perplexity and scruples, which are so often the torment of innocent and holy souls. Her last words were: "Créez en moi un cœur nouveau, O mon Dieu."

The necrology says in her epitaph (she was buried at Port Royal), "In marriage she kept the virgin's heart, and in the midst of the great world, the 'recollection' of the hermit." The epitaph ends with the words which find an echo in so many hearts, "Etiam, Veni Domine Jesu," and then follow some touching words on the twins, Paul and Theresa, whose birth cost their mother her life.

Mère Angélique writes in one of her frequent letters

[1] See St Simon, and also, for a short and clear account of the Duc de Chevreuse's character, Lord St Cyres's admirable book on "Fénelon."

to Marie Gonzague, the Queen of Poland, whose god-daughter Mme. de Luines was :—

"Your Majesty knows that she (Mme. de Luines) had feared God from her childhood, but one year God touched her in an overwhelming way through the example of her husband, so that she began as it were a completely new life, and then formed together with her husband the resolution to leave the great world and retire somewhere in the neighbourhood of Port Royal."

M. de Luines persisted in this way of life for some time, and the house was finished just before the second war of the Fronde.[1] But before the war broke out there were several events which must be recorded. The youngest of the Arnauld sisters—Madeleine—died, after long years of infirmity and unceasing prayer.

The Solitaires were left alone by the secular powers and increased in numbers, and yet, as Fontaine says, there was no slackness of devotion, no diminution in the love for retirement. Fontaine has some touching pages of description of the life of labour and of prayer. "I was struck by the providence of God," he says, "and the loving care which He had for the house (Port Royal) in giving it gardeners, carpenters, locksmiths, glaziers, shoemakers, and even porters and candlemakers, filling up Himself by His own care the most insignificant, as He filled the most important offices, such as those of doctors and surgeons."

It is a wonderful result of St Cyran's teaching and influence and of the effect that *La Fréquente Communion* and M. Singlin's sermons produced, that so many men, bound by no vows and under no rule, should have lived and prayed and worked together for so long. M. Singlin was now much *en évidence ;* his sermons attracted attention, and yet it was not that he was endowed with extraordinary gifts or graces. But he possessed simplicity and directness, and, above all, that sense of a real message which was his to deliver, which in all ages attracts men and women. His sermons became well

[1] He married twice afterwards.

known and drew fashionable congregations. One day, the 25th of August 1649 (St Augustine's Day), M. Singlin preached before a congregation among which were several Bishops and dignitaries, the Duke de Liancourt (soon to be identified with Port Royal in a rather unpleasant fashion), and others. M. Singlin's sermon was wise and moderate, according to M. Liancourt, but, as was natural on St Augustine's Day, he spoke of grace, of penitence, of vocation for holy offices. On the 22nd of September, the Archbishop of Paris[1] forbade M. Singlin to preach. The preacher wrote to the Archbishop a letter, too long to be given here, which breathes humility and respect, pointing out that not a word in the debated sermon was in any way contrary to Catholic Truth. He had been, he said, specially careful to avoid anything which had the appearance of a manifesto. The Archbishop was amenable to reason, and perceiving that he had been over hasty, withdrew the prohibition, and even came to Port Royal to hear M. Singlin and was extremely pleasant to everybody, including Mme. d'Aumont, one of the holy women who in the days of their widowhood betook themselves to a life of prayer at Port Royal. Her husband, a general in the Army, died in 1644, and she found a settled home in Port Royal in 1646, and for this Community she did a great deal; on one particular day she was able to lend M. de Paris her carriage, some accident having happened to his own. So again Port Royal basked in ecclesiastical favour.

Mère Angélique's letter to the Archbishop on the subject of M. Singlin's inhibition is worth giving :—

"Monseigneur, I venture to assure myself that as you have been pleased to treat me with extreme kindness, it will not be offensive to you that I write to you now in the sorrow in which I am and the distress with which I hear what has been told you about M. Singlin, a persecution which exceeds all that have been waged against us until now. When all the great ones of the earth were stirred up against us, I was but little moved,

[1] Jean François de Gondi.

knowing that your fatherly kindness was ever favourable to us, and so I gave no credence to what was said to our disadvantage.

"But now that God has permitted you (I think on account of my sins) to give credence to what has been written against M. Singlin, I confess to you, Monseigneur, that I am more afflicted than I have ever been in all we have borne until now. I am not fit to bear witness to the truth of his teaching, but so many people of worth, of learning, of uprightness, who have been present at his sermons could do so; and I trust, Monseigneur, that you will believe so many irreproachable witnesses, rather than ill-disposed people who have wished to deceive you, as you were not in touch with us. I beg you very humbly, Monseigneur, to continue the consequences of your goodness which ever protected us, and which laid me under the double obligation of being with as much gratitude as duty in every possible respect,

"Yours, etc."

In the years between the two wars of the Fronde, losses fell on Port Royal. M. Pallu, the beloved doctor, so bright, so kind, so human, died. Mère Angélique writes:—

"I was quite sure, dearest Sister, that you would be much grieved by the death of our good M. Pallu. It is true that it is of its kind an irreparable loss, but after all we must thank God for leaving him with us so long, and we must rejoice at the happiness which was his in that he died persevering in holy penitence, in the perfecting of which he always increased since God gave him grace to begin it. He was the kindly brother of all poor people."

M. de Séricourt, the soldier brother of M. le Maître and M. de Saci, who joined the Solitaires and who came to Port Royal in 1637, died in 1650. He left all his worldly possessions to his two brothers, beseeching them not to be displeased, for he knew well that they looked on earthly possessions in the light of heavy burdens.

They were a remarkable trio, these brothers. One by one they had renounced their respective professions,

in which they were all doing well, to take up the life of prayer and penitence. All were St Cyran's spiritual children. Le Maître and De Saci felt this break in their brotherhood most deeply. De Saci, it is said in the *Histoire de Port Royal*, looked on De Séricourt as St Bernard did on his brother Gerard. De Séricourt had been ill for eighteen months, and "bore his sufferings most patiently," wrote Mère Angélique of her nephew, observing that she had another nephew, also named Simon, who was still in the world. This was M. d'Andilly's second son, who was destined to rise to considerable eminence. The Port Royalists never learnt to look on the world as anything more than a possible but not probable place "pour faire son salut." And indeed one feels that here in the bosom of the Catholic Church prevailed far too much individualism, too little sense of corporate Church life.

His mother followed M. de Séricourt in 1651. Sister Catherine de Saint Jean had been a professed sister since 1644, but had in reality led the life of a religious ever since her separation from her husband. From her deathbed she wrote a touching letter to her former pupil, Mademoiselle de Longueville. This lady was on bad terms with her young stepmother; from her Memoirs, written after she became Duchesse de Nemours, it does not appear that she was ever a very amiable person. It shows the consideration in which Madame Le Maître was held, that for a year or two she had acted as governess to Mademoiselle de Longueville, whose mother had always been in relations with Port Royal.

Antoine Arnauld wrote an account of his sister's death to Mère Agnès. It is very touching and beautiful to read how in her dying moments Catherine turned to her son, M. de Saci, and for some short time besought his assistance as a priest. He heard her confession (he had been her confessor) and gave her the last Sacraments. It must have been a consolation to them both, one of those supreme moments when all earthly ties and relationships are forgotten and souls meet in Christ.

"What have I done," she murmured, "to have such a

son?" When all was over, M. de Saci knelt for a long time in front of the Altar, and then rose up and went about the sad duties with calmness. He had stood in a unique relation to his mother, and no doubt had helped her in her moments of agony.

Now he yielded her up with that perfect resignation to God's will which all the Port Royalists made more or less their special grace and endeavour—they echoed St Paul's words which Antoine Arnauld quoted in his letter to Agnès: "Sive vivimus, sive morimur, Domini sumus."

Angélique was re-elected Abbess soon after the death of Mme. de Luines, and returned to her beloved Port Royal des Champs, where she was joyfully received. She set to work on some needful repairs, and the Duc de Luines and M. du Gué de Bagnols took upon themselves the whole expense of these additions and, what was perhaps equally necessary, the oversight of the workmen.

Port Royal was never left long in peace. The second war of the Fronde, known generally as the "Guerre des Princes," broke out, and the nuns were all sent to Paris. Angélique sheltered many fugitive nuns who were obliged to fly; amongst these there was a poor girl who had fallen ill of smallpox. Angélique, finding that the young nun had nowhere to go, had her nursed and tended until she was well.

Angélique says:—

"We have had altogether visits from about four hundred religious—a singular providence. We have had a little additional work on account of these visits, but mercifully He has kept us from all distractions, for these visits have given us opportunities of realising our obligations to God."

In the meantime the "Solitaires" with the Duc de Luines at their head formed themselves into a guard, and drilled and prayed and worked in a way which to them recalled Nehemiah guarding Jerusalem, and perhaps reminds us of Cromwell's soldiers. M. de Saci said Mass every day; all the Offices were said and the

religious exercises were performed as usual. M. de Saci, however, was very unhappy; he could not endure the thought that it was possible that blood might be shed by these penitents, and great must have been his relief when the miserable war was ended in October 1653.

There was a great outbreak of sickness at Port Royal at this time, and Antoine Arnauld and M. de Saci devoted themselves to the care of the stricken with the devotion one would naturally expect from them.

The physician who had succeeded M. Pallu, M. Hamon, who was to be so dear and devoted a friend to Port Royal in its most unhappy days, was by no means a popular doctor at first, and a sort of cabal arose against him of which it is rather amusing to read. Even the Port Royal Solitaires were human.

By degrees, however, due in part to M. de Saci's efforts for peace, and to M. Hamon himself, the good doctor became the well-beloved physician.

Jean Hamon was born in 1617, in Normandy. He was an extremely well-educated person. He knew a great deal about literature, and was a good linguist as well as a good classical scholar.

He tells us of himself that, when he was a small boy, he was fond of aphorisms, and that the Book of Proverbs pleased him exceedingly. That love of wise sentences never forsook him.

He seems to have been a successful doctor, and to have led a useful and virtuous life up to the age of thirty-one, when to him came a call to a higher, an absolutely unworldly life.

His parish priest, M. Hamel, was a great aid to M. Hamon; little by little he felt that the call for him was *not* "Isaac's pure pleasures and a verdant home," but the life of retirement and self-denial. He was directed by M. Hamel to ask M. Singlin's advice, and Singlin at first thought of the regular religious life; but there seemed to be difficulties, and M. Hamon's thoughts and wishes turned to Port Royal. At first at Port Royal he worked in the fields; then he looked after M. Antoine

LES RELIGIEUSES DE PORT-ROYAL DES CHAMPS [illegible]NANT LES MALADES.

Arnauld, and finally at M. Pallu's death he was asked to become the Port Royal physician.

M. Hamon had a truly Christ-like love of the poor. He must have been an unspeakable comfort to the poor around Port Royal, to whom he came as a physician alike of soul and body. We shall meet him again in the days of persecution.

We are now face to face with another family whose fortunes were closely bound up with Port Royal. For this we must begin a new chapter.

CHAPTER X

THE PASCALS (1623-1654)

THE great name of Blaise Pascal is to the world at large associated with Port Royal, for Pascal's relations with the Port Royalists were intimate; yet he was never, strictly speaking, one of them. A friend, an admirer, and an opponent of their opponents, he never formally joined the band of "Solitaires." He paid long visits to Port Royal, but it was as a visitor that he came and left. But so long as Pascal is read—which will be as long as any human soul feels the burden of the problems of existence—and as long as any human intelligence can enjoy a faultless style and an unsurpassed irony, Port Royal, for his sake at least, will be remembered.

Blaise Pascal is not the only interesting member of his family. The Pascals are not unlike the Arnaulds, only they are not so numerous.

The father, Etienne, was a learned and capable person, who when his son was born was "second président de la cours des Aides de Clermont." Like the Arnaulds, the Pascal family were of Auvergne. Sainte Beuve's remark is too witty to omit: "Provenue de ce commun berceau et arrivée plus tard sur la scène en renfort aux Arnaulds qui pliaient, elle fut véritablement pour parler à la façon d'Augustin Thierry une seconde invasion franque au sein du Jansenisme: elle en marque le second temps et comme la seconde jeunesse de la gloire Carlovingienne." And like the Arnaulds, the Pascals were of the *gens de la robe;*

the family history dates as far back as the reign of Louis XI.

It is pleasant to read of the father of Blaise, Étienne Pascal, coming to Paris to study law, with introductions to the father of our Arnaulds, the kind, genial M. Arnauld of the early days.

Étienne returned to Clermont, and, after the fashion of the time, bought a legal appointment, and in time became a president of the *Cour des Aides.* In 1618 he married Antoinette Bégon, who bore him six children, and died in 1627. One longs to know more of Pascal's young mother, who was only twenty-three years older than himself, and whom he can scarcely have remembered.

Étienne Pascal left Auvergne soon after his wife's death, and settled in Paris. He was a student, a lover of science, and he seems to have made sufficient money to enable him to live a leisurely, dignified life in Paris amongst the most learned and distinguished men there. The meetings which were held at the houses of some of these *savants* became the starting-point of the Académie des Sciences.

Blaise was born and bred in a scientific atmosphere; to the last day of his life he was not in the least what one would call a man of letters or a book-lover. He was educated by his father, who with real self-denial, and for that age, extraordinary wisdom, took care not to push the wonderful boy, but to keep him back from the mere acquisition of knowledge, and encouraged him to think and to reason.

His elder sister, Gilberte, tells us how astonishing were the young Pascal's questions, and comments on the answers which he received. He always wished to know, says his sister in her life of her brother, "la raison de toutes choses." And of course we all know the story of the boy's discovery of geometry for himself. His father, from the pure love of science in general and of mathematics in particular, had thought it unwise to allow Blaise to turn his attention from the study of languages even by acquiring the early books of Euclid.

And the boy was found amusing himself by gradually discovering the science of geometry as far as to the thirty-second proposition of the first book.

M. Étienne Pascal was almost terrified, as was not indeed unnatural, at finding he was the father of a genius, and went off at once to consult a learned friend, M. Le Pailleur, who asked anxiously what was the cause of M. Pascal's evident agitation. The father told what he had just seen, and how Blaise Pascal had, so to speak, discovered mathematics.

Of course after this there was no question of putting any let or hindrance in the boy's way, and so by way of recreation the proud and happy father gave the gifted child lessons in Euclid, and allowed him to be present at the weekly meeting of his scientific friends. Very soon Blaise Pascal was regarded by these men as an equal, and at the age of sixteen he wrote a treatise on Conic Sections; but, says his sister Gilberte, "as my brother never cared for fame, this was never printed."

Pascal's only tutor was his father, who took the keenest delight in educating his son; but, alas, he forgot his early prudence, and was heedless of the risk he was running. The boy's physical health could not resist the perpetual strain, and from the time Blaise Pascal was eighteen he hardly ever knew a day's health.

And side by side with Blaise, his sister Jacqueline was growing up, a most astonishing young prodigy. Both the sisters, indeed, were gifted and remarkable. The eldest, Gilberte, was educated by her father, and in turn educated her little sister, her junior by five years. Gilberte married a lawyer, M. Périer, and became the mother of Marguérite, the subject of the miracle of the Holy Thorn, of which we shall speak later.

Gilberte was beautiful and clever, and was devoted to her brother and sister. Jacqueline, from the time when she began to speak, gave evidence of her great gifts. M. Cousin says in his delightful book, *Jacqueline Pascal*, that Jacqueline was in no wise inferior to her brother either in mind or in character.

BLAISE PASCAL
Par la Nature instruit prodige des l'enfance
Son esprit createur devina la Science
Des Calculs et des Mouvemens.
De l'Homme et de Dieu même interrogea l'Essence,
Connut l'art des Bons mots, et l'art de l'Eloquence:
Admirés et pleurés, il mourut à trente ans.

[*To face p.* 204.

It is thanks to the devotion of Gilberte Périer and to her daughter Marguérite that we know so much about Jacqueline, whose only care in life (after her conversion) was to tread the way of perfection. Jacqueline showed in her earliest years a taste for versifying; Gilberte found she could only teach her to read by letting her learn the art from a book of verses. Together with two small friends, the children of a Madame Saintot, Jacqueline composed a play and acted it, and, as Gilberte proudly relates, the performance of these very youthful authors and actors was the talk of Paris. It is a pleasing little glimpse of a gayer and more natural child life than the kind of thing we generally encounter in Port Royal circles. Amusement does not enter much into the Port Royalists' scheme of life. But this episode was before the Pascal family fell under Port Royal influence.

Jacqueline's talents brought her under the notice of no less a person than the Queen (Anne of Austria), and the little girl became a great favourite, coming and going at her pleasure, and making impromptu verses and epigrams to the great delight of her royal mistress.

In the meantime M. Étienne Pascal had come into notice in a less agreeable fashion.

It was reported that he and some others at a meeting at the Chancellor Séguier's house had grumbled, a little over-much for Richelieu's liking, concerning a reduction made in the rents which fell to the Hotel de Ville, in which M. Pascal had invested his own money. The Bastille was the fate of more than one of those poor people; Étienne Pascal only escaped by concealment. Gilberte took care of her brother and sister at this time, and little Jacqueline fell ill of smallpox, which horrible scourge destroyed the child's good looks. It is touching to read of the father creeping home to watch over his sick child, and only departing when she was out of danger. Jacqueline was, however, to prove his deliverer. On her recovery, the little girl composed some verses, which to our mind are quite detestable, in which she

thanks God for her life, and for the withdrawal of that dangerous gift, good looks :—

> "O que mon cœur se sent heureux
> Quand au miroir je vois les creux
> Et les marques de ma verole."

Bad as the verses are, there breathes the spirit of willingness to accept the cross which God held out to her, and from this ideal she never shrank.

A few months after Jacqueline's illness, Cardinal Richelieu, in one of his gay moments, ordered a children's play, and Mme. d'Aiguillon, his niece (who, we remember, visited St Cyran in his imprisonment), undertook to manage it. The kindly Duchesse, and Mme. Saintot, who was a friend of hers, thought that if little Jacqueline were to appear, her talent and her extremely youthful appearance (she was then thirteen, but looked about eight) might soften the Cardinal's heart. Accordingly Jacqueline appeared in the comedy and acted very well. After the play was over she waited about, hoping Mme. Saintot would arrange her presentation to the Cardinal. But there was no sign of Mme. Saintot, and the Cardinal was about to retire. So the courageous little Jacqueline went up to him by herself and was immediately taken on his knee, and as she began her mission by a fit of crying, the much-dreaded Minister set to work to comfort her. Mme. d'Aiguillon said some kindly words, and Jacqueline found courage to beg that her father might be allowed to come home, a favour which Richelieu promptly granted. Whereupon Jacqueline, who was certainly a little woman of the world, and had not had the *entrée* to the Court for nothing, said at once that she had another favour to ask, and that was, "Might her father come and thank the Cardinal?"

Richelieu replied that M. Pascal must certainly come, and bring all his family with him. And so it all ended happily, and M. Étienne Pascal was not only forgiven his imaginary offences (as imaginary as had been M. St Cyran's), but was sent to be one of the *intendants* of Normandy, into the Rouen district. In consequence of

this, the Pascal family took up their abode at Rouen; and Blaise, in order to help his father in a difficult task, set to work on his calculating machine. For, indeed, the office of *intendant* was a difficult one, and the provinces were groaning under unjust and excessive taxation. There had just been an attempt at a revolt; troops had been sent and the leaders hanged. What misery, what horrors are implied in these bald statements! Blaise was not in advance of his age, and neither he nor any of the Port Royalist friends had any of the searchings of heart about social questions which two centuries later stirred the minds of Lacordaire, Lamennias, of Kingsley and Maurice, and many more. And in these early Rouen years, Jacqueline amused herself with her talent for making verses. No less a person than Corneille assigned to her the prize in a competition on the rather odd subject of the Immaculate Conception. Something of this sort of literary competition seems to have existed for many centuries in Rouen.

The elder of the sisters, Gilberte, was married in 1641 to M. Périer, a distant connection of the Pascal family, himself something of a *savant*, and a member of the profession of *gens de la robe*. Pascal was now twenty-three, and it was at this period of his life that his first conversion took place.

Étienne Pascal had fallen dangerously ill, and had placed himself under the care of two much esteemed physicians. These were the two brethren, M. de la Bouteillerie and M. Des Landes, who, as we have seen, were friends of M. Guillebert, the correspondent of M. de St Cyran and of M. Du Fossé.

And they not only took care of M. Pascal's health (he had fractured his thigh), but in the fashion of that serious age, the seventeenth century, when every one seems to have been more or less interested in religion, they initiated him into the literature and the spirit of the Port Royalists—M. de St Cyran's letters; the famous *Fréquente Communion;* a writing of Jansenius, *De la Réformation de l'homme intérieur*. Of this last, Sainte Beuve reminds us, we can find traces in Pascal.

The Pascal family were strongly influenced by this new conception of ethical obligations, Blaise the most thoroughly of them all; and he entered into this spirit of devotion and drew his sister Jacqueline with him. As we have seen in the case of Antoine Le Maître, it was in the nature of St Cyran and of those who followed his teaching to enjoin all to renounce the world. This is the weak side of the great movement with which Port Royal is associated. To fight against evil and consecrate learning, labour, life itself, seemed impossible in the midst of secular employments and the distractions of the married state. The joylessness of Pascal and of the Port Royalists generally is the great defect in their teaching.

Pascal dissuaded his sister from marriage, and she fairly outran her brother. It is certain that she really had a vocation for the life of Religion, which her brother discerned; it is not probable that he interfered in anything of a love story.

Étienne Pascal embraced this higher life, and a little later the Périers, who had come to visit their family at Rouen, followed the example of their relatives. Gilberte Périer was only twenty-six, and seems to have given up society and amusements with full contentment. We remember how Du Fossé tells us of the entire conversion of his own family, and there is something very touching in the devotion and self-denial and lofty ideals by which so many people just then were possessed. About this time Pascal had his first encounter with false teaching; a certain monk at Rouen, known as Frère Saint Ange, had become notorious in a small way by some attempts at philosophical thought, which had landed him in heresy. Blaise and two of his friends having in vain tried to lead the erring religious to a right way of thinking, brought his errors to the notice of the Archbishop of Rouen, and Frère Saint Ange was obliged to retract.

Pascal was even now tormented with terrible ill-health. The doctors forbade all brain work, and, after the fashion of the time, made him swallow horrible medicines.

His wonderful prayer "For a right use of sickness" was probably written at this time (1643). It is too long to quote entirely, but a few sentences will give us a conception of the austere, resigned spirit of the young man of twenty-four, who, knowing himself to be possessed of mental powers which placed him on a level with the greatest thinkers of the day, was able to feel, like another brother in the faith, "In la sua voluntade è nostra pace":—"Lord, whose Spirit is so sweet, so good in all things, Thou who art so merciful that not only prosperity but also misfortunes which happen to Thine elect are consequences of Thy mercy, give me the grace not to act as a heathen in this condition to which Thy righteousness has brought me."

And so on, step by step, he reasons as it were with God, and prays in calm, strong words, behind which he conceals the passion of pain and of disappointment, that God's will may be worked out in him: "I ask from Thee neither health, nor sickness, nor life, nor death, but that Thou shouldest order for me health, sickness, life, death, for Thy glory and my salvation. Thou only knowest what is good for me, do for me what is Thy will; give, or take away, but conform my will to Thine."

"Thou art our Master," this surely is the key-note of the great scale on which Pascal has formed this harmony of his soul. He too breathes that fervent desire to be one with Christ which is the yearning of all holy souls throughout the ages: "Come into my heart and soul, and bear there my sufferings, and endure in me what is lacking yet in Thy Passion, that which Thou fillest up in our bodies, until the Perfect Consummation of Thy Body, so that no longer it be I who live and endure, but Thou who livest and endurest in me, O my Saviour"—words which are re-echoed by so many hearts and uttered by so many lips in varying forms but in like aspiration.

About this time also, Pascal paid a visit to Paris and came more directly under Port Royal influence, for he heard M. Singlin preach. His influence was then at its

height; he was the Christian preacher *par excellence.* He held before his hearers' minds the ideal of Christian life. Perfectly simple in manner, with no oratorical mannerisms, no display of self, he had that gift of winning souls which is given to some in every generation. Writing to the Queen of Poland, Mère Angélique says: "Our Church is always full. He always converts some one!" And as Sainte Beuve in quoting this passage remarks, "This *some one* was once upon a time Pascal!"

And it was remarkable how each of his hearers felt that M. Singlin's sermons were meant for his own particular case and aimed at him. This was so with the ardent, gifted, young Pascals. Jacqueline at once felt a great desire to enter Port Royal; through M. Guillebert she was introduced to Mère Angélique, by whom she was terrified a good deal at first, while she was comforted and assured by the gentle Mère Agnès. But her father could not bring himself to the idea of parting with Jacqueline, and she consented to give up for the time the thought of leaving home. But so far as she could, Jacqueline led the life of a religious.

Blaise Pascal did not at once give up his scientific work. He had already made some experiments which were now (1647) published under the title, *Nouveaux Expériences sur le Vide*, and he also with the help of his brother-in-law carried out experiments on the barometer. It does not perhaps come within the province of this book to describe Pascal's scientific work. Briefly it may be said that no one will dispute his place among the great mathematicians and physicists of all ages. He was conspicuously original, and his experiments on the pressure of the air brought about the acceptance of the recent discoveries of Galileo. The *Nouveaux Expériences* was the cause of a brush with the Jesuits. One of the order, Père Noël, attacked Pascal, who replied. Père Noël then sent a letter by the hand of another Jesuit, Père Talon, begging him, as he was ill, not to answer. Pascal availed himself of this permission until he discovered that another of the Jesuit Fathers was assuming that his silence meant an acknowledg-

ment of defeat. He replied, in the form of a letter to a friend, with clearness and his accustomed skill. Père Noël wrote a silly answer, and was promptly dealt with by Étienne Pascal, who remarked that for want of reasons Père Noël was using insults.

This was the first encounter, but another followed. The Jesuits accused Pascal of claiming to be the inventor of an experiment really due to the Italian savant Torricelli. Pascal was a good deal incensed at this, and wrote an indignant explanation.

It was about this time that Pascal and Descartes met once or twice. Descartes was struck with the extreme ill-health of the gifted young man, and begged him to lie in bed a great deal and take soup in quantities. They had some scientific conversation, and there seems to be a doubt as to whether Pascal did not lay claim to the discovery of the pressure of the air on mercury, when it was really due to Descartes. The truth probably is that the idea occurred to both. Every one will remember that Darwin and Wallace were working side by side on a scientific question, and published papers almost simultaneously and with perfect independence.

Certainly, the Pascal family generally and Blaise in particular, always regarded Descartes with great respect, and with that fraternal feeling which in all ages binds scientific workers together in a brotherhood which is close and very delightful, as those who have, even for a time, shared it can testify. There does, however, seem to have been some jealousy on Descartes' part; that jealousy which is sometimes oddly and sadly manifested, towards the brilliant young, by the distinguished old, in the scientific and literary world. Pascal about this time was ordered by his physicians to avoid all severe mental work; for a year or two he gave himself up to some extent to the pleasures of the world of Paris —in a good sense, however; he was one of those pure souls who have never sunk into sin. When the time came for a complete renunciation, an utter surrender to God, there was no cloud of impurity to blot his vision of that which is granted to the pure in heart. But it

is sad that the sense of the Immanence of God in all things in the world of natural law should have been denied him, and that neither he nor any Port Royalist could see that the Incarnation has hallowed the whole world, and that in the words of one of blessed memory, "Every lesson of nature and of life must illuminate the Truth, which embraces the whole fullness of existence."[1]

The recovery of this truth has been reserved for a later generation, and in great measure for the children of another branch of the Catholic Church.

During the few years that Pascal was seen in that brilliant, amusing society which was at its best in the salon of Mme. de Rambouillet and Mme. de Sablé, he formed an enduring friendship with the Duc de Roannez, a boy of twenty, who attached himself to the brilliant young scientist, his elder by some six or seven years.

A story sprang up that Pascal fell in love with the Duc's sister, but this is improbable. Certainly his letters to her show nothing of this supposed affection. His father died in 1651, a holy and blessed death. Blaise felt the loss most keenly; like the Arnaulds, the Pascals were tenderly attached to one another: Étienne Pascal had been a most tender and wise father and a thoroughly good man. There were among the *gens de la robe* at this period so many of these wise, upright, so to speak "solid" men.

Pascal wrote a remarkable letter to his brother-in-law (always a great friend of his), and to Mme. Périer, on the consolations of the Christian Faith. It is pathetic to read the words which have been echoed from so many broken hearts and will be re-echoed as long as the world lasts—"how to find comfort."

Jacqueline in the meantime had been leading a holy and almost conventual life. In a beautiful essay on Jacqueline Pascal, M. Vinet points out the extraordinary combination of almost masculine gifts and feminine graces which met in the sister of Blaise. The peculiar

[1] Westcott, Preface to *Gospel of Life*.

beauty of the Port Royal spirit, the deep seriousness, the absolute consecration to God, the complete abnegation of self, so conspicuous in all the great Port Royalists, were never more fully developed than in this young girl, who died before she had more than just passed Dante's "mezzo del cammin di nostra vita."

On the death of her father, Jacqueline felt that the long desire of her heart had been given to her. She could now retire to Port Royal. Mme. Périer was staying with her in Paris, and tells us how Jacqueline tried in vain to prepare Blaise for the coming separation. Blaise went to his room in very low spirits, and Jacqueline went quietly to bed. The next morning Mme. Périer awoke her at seven, and she got up, dressed, and went away with utter composure, though without any farewell. Neither sister dared say the parting words.

But poor Jacqueline's troubles were not over. To her profound astonishment, when the time came for her Profession and when the question of dowry had to be debated, Blaise Pascal, the brother who had always held up to her the Religious Life as the one and only ideal to be followed, showed himself as disagreeable about money matters as the most worldly-minded brother or father could have been.

Poor Jacqueline was utterly taken aback. As she says in her story which she wrote for one of the Mothers of Port Royal: "I had not hesitated one moment about proposing this so-called disinheritance; I only desired to do it for God, and I was sure not only that they would approve, but that they would even be glad to share, by their consent, in this tiny bit of charity on my part, for *they* [her brother and sister] often make very considerable offerings." However, one can never reckon on anybody, even the very best of people, if it is a question of alienating money which, so to speak, belongs to a family.

Jacqueline, the most sensitive of souls, all but fell ill, and to her rescue came Mère Agnès, whom we have not met for some time. She of course took all the money

trouble as a true Arnauld naturally would take it. She lifted up the whole disagreeable, rather sordid worry into the atmosphere in which she habitually moved and breathed. Only to care for what is eternal, to remember that nothing temporal is irreparable, that all tears should be kept for sin. And a novice should think it really a disgrace to Port Royal to cry for any vexation, much more so for the mortification of having no dowry. Had not the great Mother Angélique herself wished to give away all she possessed and become a poor dowerless religious in another house? Nothing was more really valuable to Religion than absolute poverty.

Jacqueline listened, half convinced, but still hurt in all her family pride and in the tenderest feelings of her nature.

Then M. Singlin came to talk to her. In the meantime Agnès went to see Angélique, whose feeling was that Jacqueline should give all her portion to her family and only think of the Profession so close at hand.

M. Singlin, with a masculine aversion to cutting knots and taking short cuts, thought that it was just possible to be too generous and not sufficiently humble. With that sanctified common sense which was his great characteristic, he considered the question calmly, with no *parti pris*.

If people with whom we are concerned deceive themselves and wish to be unjust and unfair to us, it is a positive duty to try to convince them of their mistake, provided, he went on with the Port Royal loftiness of thought, we are sure that we are not moved by greed of money.

But, on the whole, in Jacqueline's case M. Singlin was of the Mother's opinion. The Pascals were really good people, and it was better to yield and not to strain relations any further. Poor Jacqueline herself hardly knew what she wanted, but her instinct of obedience came to her aid and she only uttered one little request. Could she not be received as a *sœur converse*—a lay sister? But M. Singlin rightly refused this position, for Jacqueline's strength would certainly not have been

equal to the demands which would have been made upon it.

Jacqueline wrote to her relations, and the next day, she tells us, she had an interview with Mère Angélique, who, as might have been expected, bade her regard all these contradictions as means of grace. Still—poor Jacqueline's wounded heart needed comfort, and the next day, after Mass, Mère Angélique, so often severe to others and invariably unsparing to herself, took the poor child into her arms and comforted and petted her for a long time.

Angélique's counsels were as wise and as characteristic as any she ever gave. Amongst other things she told Jacqueline: "I would not for the sake of twice the disputed money have had you spared this trial. My child, you gave up the world too easily. God gave you the especial grace of very early recognising the vanity of amusement and of society, but you were not really holier for that, for it was entirely God's gift. You were very detached, but bad things remained—your own private passions and the intense affection and union which bound you to your family."

It would be too long to quote all the extremely interesting conversations. Mère Angélique's thesis was that Jacqueline had expected too much from her family, especially from Blaise. She too, she told Jacqueline, had been tried by injustice and by the failure of the relations of a novice to pay a promised dowry at a time when it would have been particularly welcome. "I really did feel hurt by this." However, M. de St Cyran had advised her to bear this trial—a very real one—and never to show any hurt feeling, and said that she was to treat the people who had played her falsely as if she had forgotten all about it.

"C'est pourquoi, ma fille, au nom de Dieu" (we can see the Mother getting more and more excited) "ne vous emportez point contre vos parents, ne leur témoignez aucun ressentiment, et que cela n'aliéne aucunement votre union, car, enfin, de quoi s'agit il? d'un peu de bien, voilà tout."

And so Jacqueline was to write to her brother and sister with absolute affection and openness, and was to think as little as possible about her possessions and of the use she had already made of them. "Feu M. de St Cyran" was again quoted; he is Mère Angélique's great support still. Jacqueline's relations were simply acting as they did because they had not been granted sufficient light, and Jacqueline's feelings showed that she was not yet a thorough Port Royalist. If it was needful that her relations should be unjust to some one, it was good that they had been unjust to Port Royal, "for you could not know how others might bear such things, and for us, we do not trouble ourselves over much."

Blaise arrived a few days afterwards, and Jacqueline tried her best to disguise her feelings, but in vain. The brother and sister were far too closely united for him not to see that she was unhappy. Blaise was not a little surprised when Jacqueline broke off some complaint he was beginning to make by telling him that as Port Royal was perfectly willing to receive her for nothing, she was resolved to trouble herself no longer. The family pride of the brother was touched; he declared that he would settle matters and do what was fair and right. So once again the affair of poor Jacqueline's dowry had to be discussed, and Mère Angélique's one anxiety was, that not a shadow of self-interest should be shown by any one. M. Singlin was the spiritual father of Port Royal and of the Pascals, and was naturally not a little anxious to bring Blaise and Mme. Périer to a right mind; and Mére Agnes's only wish was that Jacqueline, who as novice was under her especial care, should use the trial rightly. Jacqueline was to make no effort, Agnès said, to bring about what she so much wished, and when the young girl spoke rather warmly of the injustice of her relations, Agnès reproved her severely and said that only pride or avarice, perhaps both, could possibly make her speak in this way.

At last everything was brought to a satisfactory end, but Mère Angélique would not have the legal documents signed until after Jacqueline's Profession, so that what-

ever Blaise Pascal did, should be done—as it were—*not* of necessity. Pascal, one would think, might have known Port Royal, but it seems he did not, and both he and his lawyers were much surprised. Mère Angélique addressed him in words very few and very dignified. For fear lest Jacqueline had not been sufficiently explicit, she said that she herself must beg him to do whatever he did simply as an alms, not for any other reason. For M. de St Cyran had taught them to receive nothing from the hands of God except what came from God; anything done from any other motive was not from the Holy Spirit.

Pascal answered in a suitable manner, and this business, which one would think might have been avoided, was happily ended.

Angélique came back from the parlour and told the newly professed, now to be known as Sœur Euphèmie, that everything was over and she need vex herself no more, but, she said, it really troubled her that Jacqueline should have taken it so much to heart. "I really am quite afraid, my child," she said to me with wonderful charity, "that you may have offended God in this affair; do think about it seriously, I beg you." Then she went on to praise Blaise, and to remind his sister how generously he gave of his own means.

And so the affair was ended, and Jacqueline, or Sœur Euphèmie as we must henceforth call her, became to her brother an example of devotion and a real help to him in his own spiritual life.

Jacqueline was professed in 1653, and, to quote an account of her life given in *Vies édifiantes et interessantes*, "she in a few years fulfilled a long time."[1] She was set to be mistress of the postulants and then to look after the children of Port Royal, and some years afterwards she drew up a rule for the direction of children which chills us a good deal.

It is written apparently for M. Singlin, who seems to have asked her to draw up a *précis* of her rules as to the direction of children.

[1] Wisdom iv. 13.

She begins by saying that she owes everything to the advice given her by Mère Angélique, that she should always simply remember, "Dieu fera tout."

There is evidently much kindness and no severity in Sœur Euphèmie's rule, but an absolute repression of children's joys, of playfulness. Yet, it was full of goodness and of deep and intense affection. Little children must be treated if possible as little doves. And she has a righteous horror of *nagging*. If children must be punished, it must be done very quietly—every pains must be taken to prevent them from falling into habits of deceit or falsehood; great gentleness should always be exercised.

It is the absence of healthy play and the over insistence on attendance at Offices which makes the picture so gloomy; but that girls need to play, and not to be always watched, is a discovery of very recent days.

Sœur Euphèmie says much of the need of confidence between the mistress and her pupils, and of the private conversations which should sometimes be held. Her one and only aim was—to make her children good. We have from her a meditation on the Mystery of the Death of our Lord Jesus Christ which is much too long to quote entirely, and which breathes a spirit of deep devotion, but—like so many holy and devout souls of that age and of that school of thought—Jacqueline Pascal seems to miss the perception that after all it is with a living Lord that we have to do, and that although we die it is only that we may live.

Pascal seems at that time (1652-1663) to have occupied himself with science and with society. He wrote the curious *Discours sur les Passions de l'Amour*. This may have been written at the command of some literary clique, some *salon;* or as one of his latest biographers, M. Boutroux, suggests, Pascal may have wished to try his powers on something else than mathematics. Possibly he was speaking from the depths of experience, when he writes of the pleasures of a concealed love and of the love a man may feel for one

above him in rank. On the whole, as we have said, it is possible but not probable that this nameless beloved was the sister of Pascal's friend, the Duc de Roannez.

It was in these years that some of his chief mathematical discoveries were made. Two treatises on mathematical subjects were written at this time, and with the mathematician Fermat, Pascal corresponded on the theory of chance. And he seems to have abandoned the idea of a life of devotion; he contemplated marriage; he wished for some definite appointment; when again God touched him and his second conversion set him apart for ever.

It was in 1653 that the second conversion was granted to him. It was an accident apparently which produced this. Because the traces of his horses broke, Pascal escaped what must have seemed certain death; he was driving in a carriage with four horses, and the leaders, taking fright, jumped over the bridge of Neuilly; but as the harness gave way, the carriage and the other horses stopped abruptly.

Various legends have grown up around this escape; one that Pascal often had a vision of an abyss opening at his side, and that he was subject to hallucinations; but, as Sainte Beuve says, his conversion came from a soul newly touched, not from a bewildered brain.

And now began a series of visits to Port Royal (de Paris), and long and earnest conversations with his sister, once his pupil, now his teacher.

On December 8, Pascal was at Port Royal, and went into church to hear M. Singlin's sermon. The preacher's subject was the absolute need of self-surrender, of undertaking nothing without prayer; a sermon on what ought to be a commonplace of Christian life, but which has to be newly taught and learnt in every generation.

This was the turning-point in Blaise's life. He, like many another, felt that the sermon was preached to him and for him, and what was he to do? And to him was granted something of the ecstasy of faith, something of a real revelation and of those wonderful experiences of

which saints have humbly testified, and of which Keble says :—

> "If ever on the Mount with Thee
> I seem to soar in vision bright,
> With thoughts of coming agony,
> Stay Thou the too presumptuous flight."

Pascal, like many of the men who came under the influence of Port Royal, felt the need of quiet, and retired to Port Royal des Champs, where he encountered M. de Saci. Jacqueline wrote to her sister that their brother lost nothing by this change in the way of "direction," for M. Singlin had provided him with an incomparable spiritual guide, "aussi est-il de bonne race," the good breed of the Arnaulds! M. Singlin had constituted Jacqueline as Pascal's director provisionally while he was away!

At Port Royal des Champs, Pascal shared in the daily life of the other "Solitaires," joining in all the Offices from Prime to Compline, and feeling no ill effects from early rising and plain living. He had gone at first at the Epiphany to the house of the Duc de Luines, and then migrated to the country-house occupied by the Solitaires. He lived quite simply, making his own bed, and being waited on as little as possible.

He was intensely happy, with that fervent joy which comes to so many elect souls when they have finally made a great venture of faith and have committed once for all their way unto the Lord.

His sister writes with a bright playfulness that she cannot imagine what M. de Saci will make of so joyous a penitent, and gladly congratulates him on his improved health. "The cure of the soul cures the body also, unless indeed God wishes to try us and strengthen us by our infirmities—for it is not a small advantage to receive a penance directly from God Himself."

A wonderful word of comfort!

And the Port Royalists welcomed Pascal with great joy.

He, however, never really belonged to them. He

made occasional Retreats at Port Royal, but never finally took up his abode there. He wrote a short essay, *Sur la Conversion d'un Pécheur*, at this time—a bit of self-analysis, the burden of which is a re-echo of St Augustine—"Fecisti nos ad Te Domine, et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in Te."

It is pleasant to return to Fontaine and read his account of Pascal's arrival: Pascal came with a great reputation, and M. de Saci's special task was to teach him to hold earthly knowledge in small esteem. Pascal naturally had much to say on religious subjects, and like all converts thought many of his recoveries to be discoveries. M. de Saci's quiet comment was that M. Pascal was much to be admired, for he had never read the Fathers, and yet had come to the same conclusion as they had.

M. de Saci was never, so to speak, carried away by novelty. Descartes and his opinions had considerable influence on many of the Port Royalists, and many were the discussions on the subject of automatism, and not a few the experiments to prove that animals were mere machines, says Fontaine. The Duc de Luines was the author of these discussions, but M. de Saci only smiled gently and seemed to anticipate Tennyson's lines:—

> "Our little systems have their day;
> They have their day and cease to be;
> They are but broken lights of Thee,
> And Thou, O Lord, art more than they."

"What new idea does it give me," he said to Fontaine, "of God's greatness, when they tell me the sun is a mass of gases, and animals are wound-up machines?" De Saci looked on Descartes in the light of a robber who had pillaged another robber—Descartes had carried off Aristotle's spoils, and Aristotle (or what was supposed to be Aristotle) had too long dominated the Church. M. de Saci, like some others of a later day, wished for a return to the Fathers and for an appeal to Scripture. De Saci had a vague perception

of the Divine immanence and of God in all things, which made him distrust Descartes.

Pascal's famous conversation with De Saci on the value of Epictetus and of Montaigne, is well known. No doubt Pascal prepared for it, and Fontaine has taken his notes admirably and given it to us through the medium of his own delightful style.

Epictetus, Pascal placed at the head of non-Christian moralists. If, says Pascal, he had but known the weakness, the powerlessness of man, "j'ose dire qu'il mériteroit d'être adoré." That is the defect—of course; it has been pointed out by many and many a spiritual writer that humility is a grace unknown to the world before Christianity.

Montaigne, who did for the French language of the sixteenth century what Pascal was to do for the seventeenth, is the very genius of scepticism—not the deep, heartfelt, solemn doubt experienced by many noble souls, which may lead on to the steadfast patience, the courage of Pascal, and of many another. Montaigne pushed religion out of court. Sainte Beuve devotes a few pages of masterly criticism to Montaigne, and points out how Montaigne, in his apology for Raimond de Sebond (a Spanish author translated by him) derides man, whom he considers as completely isolated and deprived of grace, of Divine Light. Montaigne to all intents and purposes was a pure pagan. He clung to the old religion and disliked the Huguenots, but he never understood what the word religion meant.

Pascal remarked that Epictetus would be incomparably excellent as a disturber of the peace of those who sought it in the outward and visible. Montaigne, on the other hand, would bring down the pride of the self-opinionated, and those who trusted to human knowledge, and would convince them of the very small amount of illumination afforded to the human mind: "It is difficult after that to be tempted to reject mysteries because one finds difficulties in them; for one's intellect is so humiliated that it is not at all disposed to pronounce whether

or not the Incarnation and the Mystery of the Eucharist are possible."

And, says Nicholas Fontaine, these two great people, De Saci and Pascal, came to a perfect agreement on the subject of religion, although they attained their conclusion in absolutely different ways.

Pascal was not unendurably ill at this time, but he was in a continual state of suffering, and traces of this are everywhere to be found in the *Pensées*. As Sainte Beuve says, "Pascal is ill; this must often be in our minds when we are reading the *Pensées*," and it is this physical suffering which makes the thought of the sufferings of our Blessed Lord so consoling to him.

Pascal's two great friends followed his example. They were the Duc de Roannez and M. Domat. Both became friends of Port Royal, and M. le Duc had to bear much family opposition when he determined to break off his career. A servant, the *concierge* of his house in Paris, made up his mind to kill the tiresome M. Pascal, who had so entirely and so injudiciously, as was thought, influenced the Duc. Happily, Pascal, who was staying with M. de Roannez, had gone out, and it is to be supposed that second thoughts prevented the enraged *concierge* from another attempt. The young convert was only twenty-four. M. de Roannez some years afterwards sold his office of Governor of Poitou, and retired to the house of the Oratorian Fathers. He was worn out with lawsuits and debts inherited from his father, but, in spite of all, or rather perhaps because of all this trouble, his sweet and tender religious spirit grew in holiness and in devotion. M. Domat was a friend of Pascal, and had been educated at the Jesuits' College in Paris; he had become a successful lawyer and a good mathematician, and also a student of theology. He was always held in great esteem by the Port Royalists, and was Pascal's true and devoted friend to the last day of the latter's life. M. Domat did not abandon his profession, and died in 1696 with some measure of fame; he was one of those good and worthy men who "serve God in the state."

CHAPTER XI

THE BEGINNING OF PERSECUTION—THE PROVINCIAL LETTERS (1652)

BEFORE we enter on the subject of the famous Provincial Letters, we must go back a little in our history and once more visit the well-beloved society of Port Royal.

Anne Eugénie Arnauld died in 1652, thirty-eight years since that happy day when, as she said, she could not weep for her sister's departure to Maubuisson, she was in such a glow of happiness at finding herself professed.

Anne Eugénie is one of the most attractive of the Port Royalist nuns of the second order. She is a little overshadowed by her sisters Agnès and Angèlique, and by her niece Angélique de St Jean, but she possessed striking qualities. She had, as we have seen, aided in the reform of Maubuisson and of Lys, and she had, much against her own inclinations, acted for many years as mistress of the children sent to Port Royal to be educated. She seems to have been a peculiarly tender and affectionate mistress; we saw in the chapter on the schools of Port Royal how the aim of all those who laboured in them was to preserve the baptismal innocence of their charges. This Anne Eugénie always put first, and she lived and worked and prayed for her children, considering their faults as hers, and showing herself a true pupil of St Cyran. And her affection was returned; the greatest punishment which could be inflicted on the children whom Anne instructed was that she should refuse to be present at their recreation.

Even Port Royal in these days had its "tracasseries." A certain Sœur Flavie Passart, of whom we shall hear much in later times, set herself to annoy the patient Anne Eugénie and to complain of her gentleness. In 1640 Anne ceased to be mistress of the children, and for a long time before her death she was in very bad health. She was much loved and sought after by many, and the strict Carmelites looked on her as a saint. The Princesse de Guemenée, in the days when she was devoutly inclined and was often at Port Royal, had a peculiar affection for Anne Eugénie.

Anne passed away while as yet there had been only the grumblings of the storm which was so soon to fall on Port Royal. Mère Angélique writes :—

"You have guessed rightly, my dearest Sister, it was my sister Anne who went to God on New Year's Day. I thank you most humbly for the prayers which you said for her : I hope that she will repay your love in the presence of God, where we have every reason to hope that she has obtained mercy. Our house was much grieved at losing her, and comforted by her holy death. God called her to the Religious Life when she was twenty-four, and since then she has had grace from Him never to look back, ever to advance in the work of conversion. We were six sisters, now only our Mother Agnès and I remain ; we cannot last long. She has had a heavy cold since I came, but she is better, thank God. Everything is in His hands. Blessed are those who have no other wish or care save that of preparing for the hour when the Divine Master, the loving Bridegroom will come to call them. Pray to him, dear Sister, I beg you, that He will give me this grace. I will ask the same for you, whose I am with my whole heart."

In 1652 the Jesuits uttered some malicious slanders. A certain Père Brisacier, who had much resented his failure to procure the condemnation of Arnauld's *Fréquente Communion*, published in 1651 a detestable book called *Jansenisme confondu*, containing the most flagrant calumnies against the Port Royal nuns, in which occurred the expressions, "foolish virgins," "anti-sacramentarians," and so on. Mme. D'Aumont felt it

as a matter of obligation to write to the Archbishop of Paris, more especially as M. de Callaghan, who had excited the particular hatred of the Jesuits, had been given the living which he held through her own recommendation. Mère Angélique herself also wrote in the respectful and dignified terms which she always employed; and the Archbishop published a strong condemnation of Brisacier, which censure he sent to Mère Angélique's brother, the Bishop of Angers. The foes of Port Royal were not easily put to shame or to silence. One Father now wrote a book to prove that Port Royal held views similar to those of Calvin on the Eucharist; and the absurd and malignant story of a plot made in 1621 by St Cyran and Antoine Arnauld with three nameless heretics to destroy Christianity and establish a sort of Deism, was revived. Antoine was nine years old in 1621, but the Father had no misgiving about dates, and wished to include in his charge Agnès and the other nuns of Port Royal.

However absurd lies may be, they always hurt if those who utter them are numerous and impudent. Mud plentifully scattered often sticks, and there were many good people, who, not unnaturally, thought that a society attacked by such eminent persons as the Jesuits could not be entirely blameless.

In 1654, Angélique, who had been four times elected Abbess for periods of three years, retired, and the choice fell on Marie des Anges, who not so many years before had returned from Maubuisson, begging for the very lowest place. She was, perhaps, of all those trained by Mère Angélique, the one most imbued by the Mother's spirit. Angélique's letter to one of the Sisters is worth quoting. The Sister in question had apparently disliked the change of Superiors, and to her Angélique wrote :—

"It is not for us to make comparisons between the gifts and graces of different souls; but if we were right, I should venture to say that there is in the world no more loving, humble or pure a soul than our Mother's. And this makes me hope that God will be merciful to

us through her direction. The uniformity of her life, in the thirty-nine years she has been a nun, unshaken by any change, is a very rare thing, especially in trials such as she has experienced; no one could ever say anything of her except that she was a holy woman. It is just weak human nature, dear Sister, to say what you say; and believe me, it is a very good thing to change the Mother, so that obedience may result not from custom, respect of human affection, but from simply paying attention only to God and His Divine authority in Superiors; that is what sanctifies our obedience and makes it worthy of God; otherwise we should often be deceived, thinking we ought to obey God, but really following our own reason, our own inclination, which pay more heed to the creature than to God. I assure you I shall serve you better by obeying than by commanding. One is never free from the law of charity: . . . I have greater need than you have for humility, for all the mistakes I have made about you and all our Sisters; may God renew us all by His mercy. We must, dearest one, bear the care of one another cheerfully. . . . Let us all be united to God, and then we shall be united to one another and be so happy."

Racine, in his account of Port Royal, explains the possession which the bitterness against Port Royal obtained over the whole Society of Jesus, by observing that Jesuits always go to Jesuits for information. Young men entered the Society very early, and heard from their instructors how wicked the Port Royalists were, and in turn they in good faith handed on the information. We have seen the same tendency in the English Church.

"Besides," says Racine, "it is the vice of most members of a religious society to believe that they can never do wrong when they are defending the honour of their Community. This honour is a species of idolatry, and they think everything, justice, common sense, truth, can be sacrificed to it. It may be constantly said of the Jesuits," he goes on, "that this fault is more usual among them than among any other society; it has reached even this point, that some of their casuists have advanced this horrible maxim that a 'religious'

can conscientiously calumniate and even kill all persons whom he thinks injurious to his society.'"

And then Racine points out that there was a literary jealousy. For the Jesuits had been regarded as the learned and educational order of the Catholic world, and now Port Royal ventured to dispute their precedence.

But, in spite of the Jesuits, Port Royal was still held in great esteem at this time in many quarters. Mère Angélique returned to Port Royal des Champs in 1653, and, as she wrote to the Queen of Poland, there were twenty-five "Solitaires," or, as she called them "Hermites," at Port Royal, and a large number of children who were being educated.

Madame de Sablé, of whom we shall have something to say later on, built a house adjoining Port Royal de Paris, and Mlle. de la Roche Guyon, the grand-daughter of the Duc de Liancourt, with other well-born girls, was being educated by the nuns.

Mère Angélique's letters to the Queen of Poland are a perfect mine of information concerning Port Royal. She writes in 1654:—

"I do not know if a certain Almanac has been sent to your kingdom; it is called the *Confusion of the Jansenists*, and above sixteen thousand copies have been circulated through France. Not only are they (the Jansenists) supposed to be excommunicated by our holy father the Pope—what is too horrible, they are classed among Huguenots!"

It is tempting to quote more of Mère Angélique's letters. The Princesse de Guemenée's temporary conversion had broken down, and there are frequent allusions to her in Angélique's letters to the Queen of Poland; there is one to the truant and disappointing, but always beloved friend, herself:—

"I have heard, Madame, what you have been pleased to do in this last affair, and how strongly how affectionately, you have struggled to prevent the oppression with which we are threatened. I am not at

all surprised. . . . I may venture to say to you, Madame, that I was glad for you as for ourselves, in the hope that God will repay you and reward you for your strong and constant protection of those whom you believe innocent."

The outbreak of rancour against Port Royal was due to a certain Cornet, who as far back as 1649 had submitted seven propositions to the Sorbonne for examination. He did not state that they were taken from Jansenius' book, but there was no doubt that they were meant to reflect on what was beginning to be considered a school of thought originated by Jansenius. Seventy members of the Sorbonne protested against Cornet's proceedings, and succeeded at least in rejecting Cornet's seventh proposition and substituting another for discussion, drawn from a very different source. However, the *Parlement* of Paris interfered and the discussion was forbidden. But, as was to be supposed, the matter was not allowed to drop. M. Habert, who had recently been made Bishop of Vabres, wrote a long letter to the Pope, asking that the five propositions might be condemned. In this letter, Jansenius and his book are mentioned, yet it is never clearly stated that the five propositions are to be found in the *Augustinus*. This letter was signed by twenty-five bishops. The following are the propositions :—

1. Some commands of God are impossible, even to just persons who wish and who try to keep them in proportion to the strength which they possess at the time; and grace that would make it possible to obey is lacking.

2. In fallen man, interior grace is never resisted.

3. In order to deserve blame or praise in fallen man, there is no need for freedom of action, but only for freedom from constraint.

4. The semi-Pelagians admit the necessity of interior prevenient grace for every single action, even for the beginnings of faith, and they were heretical only in that they imagined that grace was of such a nature that the will of man could either resist or consent to it.

5. It is a semi-Pelagian error to say that Jesus Christ died or that He shed His blood, for all men.

The sending of this letter was not long a secret, and there was a great deal of difference of opinion as to what was to be done. A good many bishops and clergy wished that no notice should be taken; by all means let these propositions be condemned; no one wished to defend them. But others thought that a clear manifesto should be sent to the Pope, and these counsels prevailed. A letter signed by Henri Arnauld, Bishop of Angers, and others, was duly sent to the Pope, through the hands of M. de St Armour, in which they expressed their strong disapproval of the first document.

The Pope had directed that a Congregation should be formed for the consideration of the disputed points, and the meeting of this body dragged on its weary way through some six months. Pope Innocent X. was very kind to what may be termed the Augustinian party, for both sides sent deputies; but the Augustinians nevertheless found great difficulty in ever seeing him, or in persuading him to hear or to read what they had to say. He did allow them to plead before him once, but what they had wished was a discussion, and this was refused. Two members of the band sent by the Augustinian Bishops harangued the Pope for four hours.

The Abbé de Lalane, whose discourse was printed, and from its form was known as the *Écrit à trois Colonnes*, dwelt on St Augustine, whose authority he said had been attacked, and he interpreted the five propositions, first in a Catholic, then in a Calvinist, and finally in a Molinist sense. For a third school had arisen—the Molinist, so called from the Spanish monk Molina, who had published a treatise entitled *The Harmony of Free Will and Grace*, in which he certainly showed considerable leanings to semi-Pelagianism, and roused the wrath of the Dominicans, who perceived that the teaching of the *Summa Theologia* of St Thomas Aquinas was not in agreement with Molina.

Molina's treatise was never condemned, however, in consequence of the efforts of the Jesuits. Another

Augustinian deputy, Père Des Mares, dwelt on efficacious grace. They had golden eloquence, the Pope said, but nevertheless he decided against them—not without hesitation, however. Innocent, who disliked theological subtleties, was very unwilling to issue a condemnation.

One of the members of the Congregation, Pallavicini, says: "When the Pope came to the edge of the chasm, and measured the greatness of the leap with his eyes, he held back, and was not to be moved to any further advance."

But the Pope's scruples were not shared by members of the Congregation. Cardinal Chigi, soon to be known as Alexander VII., persuaded him to issue the Bull in which the five propositions were condemned as heretical, and—what was tolerably significant—the Bull began in this way:—

"Having read the *Augustinus* of Cornelius Jansenius, and knowing that discussions have arisen chiefly in France on five of his propositions."

The deputies of the Augustinian party presented themselves to the Pontiff, and ventured to express a hope that the Pope (who was exceedingly amiable; "les caressa extrêmement," wrote the French ambassador) did not wish in this Bull to impugn the doctrine of efficacious Grace, or St Augustine's teaching. To which His Holiness replied, "Questo è certo."

Now we enter on the long story of persecution. Now Port Royal's evil days are to begin. Before we enter on this sad chapter, let us examine the nature of the controversy.

The doctrine of grace, that is the watchword of the one school. Man's free will is the watchword of the other.

But no one can read the history of the controversy and not see that both sides have some truth in their contending statements. In fact, the Jesuits' theology was—so long as they did not formulate too much—mainly right. The Jansenists'—when pushed to its logical consequences—hopelessly wrong. For they cut

away the ground from moral responsibility, and, as has been admirably put, they were but half-Angustinians :—

"They held Augustine's doctrine of grace and predestination . . . but they did not hold that sublime belief—shall we say that sublime philosophy—which lay at the bottom of their master's thought—the belief that God fills all things ; that the beauty of nature, the affections of the heart, the truth of science, the light of intelligence, all proclaim to him that hath an ear—we made not ourselves. He made us Who liveth for ever. Without these thoughts—and it has often been divorced from them—the doctrine of predestination is a nightmare."[1]

We have had occasion to notice this aspect in the Port Royal teaching—in St Cyran and others—this absolute failure to see the presence of God in the world. They were not far removed sometimes from thoughts perilously near Manichæism, in their violent denunciation of marriage, of life in the world. They had little joy in the Lord ; they could not realise the working of God in all good things—in the lives of good men who lived before Christ. Yet they did grasp one fragment of the whole truth, the absolute need of God's grace. It is a truth which needs to be asserted again and again. And there is truth in the conception of souls wholly possessed by grace, who, because they have wholly surrendered their wills to God, are entirely dominated by Him, and who sin not, *i.e.* do not live in sin. "Of certain quite visibly elect souls, at all events, the theory of irresistible grace might seem the almost necessary explanation," says Mr Pater, in his essay on Pascal.

And the Jesuits' theology is true on its side. They saw the exceeding love of God ; they saw that it was abundantly possible for man to sin against that love ; they were anxious to shut no one out. Where they went wrong, as it seems, was in their willingness to lower the Christian standard ; to accept any sort of miserable excuse ; to allow holiness and the require-

[1] *Unity in Diversity*, by Dr Bigg, pp. 60-61.

ments of God's law to be whittled down to a mechanical reception of the Sacraments, and a repentance which, as all thinking men perceived, needed to be repented of.

The Catholic Church has never committed itself to any Pelagian or semi-Pelagian doctrine; what it has always taught is that all movements of good in the soul, inside or outside the Church, are of God; as each supply of grace is received, so we receive grace for grace, but all of God, from God, through God.

"Grant to us, Lord, the spirit to think and to do always such things as be rightful," exactly expresses the right attitude of soul. "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to work." It is the failure to realise that God the Holy Ghost is working always, in all places, and in all men, which makes it possible to hold the semi-Pelagian view that we can turn to God of our own selves.

But, as has been admirably put in Dr Mason's *Faith of the Gospel*, "Grace never supersedes the man's self-determination. It would be totally at variance with its purpose, were it to compel men to act in a certain way, independent of their own choice. For it is not God's object merely to get right things done, but to get holy characters established; and the only notion we can form of a holy character is that of a being who always freely chooses holiness."

The late Canon Bernard says, in his admirable book *The Central Teaching of Jesus Christ:* "Zeal for the truths of the grace and the faithfulness of God has led some to set aside the very nature of the being who is to be the subject of them; but doctrines of irresistible and indefectible grace are obviously and absolutely irreconcilable with these words of Jesus (believe in Me) which call for conscious choice and deliberate intention . . . and contemplate possible perils in regard to the relations which His people are to maintain with Himself."

The Council of Trent maintained the two principles, Grace on the one hand is omnipotent, and no one can

enter on the way of Salvation unless he be called, and yet man is free to reject or accept grace.[1]

On the publication of Innocent X.'s Bull, the Jesuits gave to the world the horrible Almanac, of which it was a great pity that M. de Saci took any notice. It is to this epoch that belongs the story of a bishop, who was reckoned as of the Molinist school, entering a monastery as dinner was going on with the usual reading aloud. The reader uttered the words, "It is God which worketh in us to will and to work." And the prelate indignantly asked what was being read. We are ignorant as to his comment on St Paul.

In spite of some resistance, and a long wordy war, and negotiations with Cardinal Mazarin, the Bull had to be received and published in France; and there was a burst of calumny. M. d'Andilly wrote to the Cardinal, and M. Le Maître published an account of the proceedings of the "Solitaires," who were described by the Jesuits as the special defenders of the Jansenist heresy. He gave the names of those who were living in retirement, described their employment and the way in which they lived.

"It is not a Community," wrote M. Le Maître, "there are no vows, no other rule than of the Gospel, no bond save that of Catholic love; no private nor public aim, save this—to win heaven. . . . It is only a place of retreat, . . . to which no one comes except of his own free choice, and in which no one stays except the Spirit of God hold him in it. . . . If," he goes on in words which breathe the indignation of a lofty and a holy soul, "if it is a crime to be united by such a holy love, to have one heart and one soul, to regard interest in worldly matters as alien to the spirit of retirement . . . well it is the crime of the earliest of the faithful."

This memoir, of which the above short quotation will give some idea, appeared in 1654. Meanwhile the redoubtable Antoine Arnauld kept silence, worked with his nephews at the translation of the New Testament

[1] See Appendix, Note IV.

and at the Lives of the Saints, and collected materials for a work which Antoine Arnauld had undertaken at the request of the Port Royal Sisters on *La Perpetuité de la Foi.* This was to be a collection of extracts from the writings of the Fathers on the Eucharist.

In 1655, however, Antoine's silence was broken. The first real note of persecution was struck. M. le Duc de Liancourt, who was singled out in a particularly offensive manner, was a man of high character, known however to be a great friend of the Port Royalists. His wife, Jeanne de Schomberg, was the daughter of the Maréchal de Schomberg,[1] who had been a great friend of M. d'Andilly. She was a noble and high-spirited woman, and had won the affection of her husband, who, as a young man had sown a large crop of wild oats in the shape of duels and unworthy attachments. She nursed him tenderly through smallpox, but it was only when she herself fell ill that he realised, after eighteen years of married life, how dear his wife had become. He then little by little gave himself up to the life of religion, and when he was about forty he adopted finally the way of penitence "à la mode de Port Royal." D'Andilly and all "nos Messieurs" were friends of M. and Madame de Liancourt, and M. le Duc was of those who visited St Cyran at Vincennes. The married life of the devout couple was one of true happiness for many years. They had only one son, M. de la Roche Guyon, who was killed in battle after a married life of no great happiness. His young wife, Madame de la Roche Guyon, married again, and appears to have looked back on her life at Liancourt with something like a shudder. One quite realises that the grave austerity which the disciples of Port Royal brought into their surroundings would be most uncongenial to the conventional great lady of the ordinary type. "There are no beautiful prisons," said she to some one who congratulated her on the beauty of Liancourt.

There was one child of the marriage, a little daughter,

[1] The grandfather of the Duchesse de Liancourt settled in France in the time of Henri III.

who was sent to Port Royal. Mère Angélique mentions the little girl in a letter to the Queen of Poland. We are anticipating a little, but when Mademoiselle de la Roche Guyon was leaving the Convent to be married to the Prince de Marsillac, the son of the famous Rochefoucauld, Mme. de Liancourt wrote for her some admirable counsels, which Sainte Beuve compares with Fénelon's *De l'Education des Filles.* One sentence quoted by Sainte Beuve shows the tone of mind which inspired the words: "As often as something beautiful or good comes in my way, I make some act of thanksgiving to God, in my heart, and an act of love."

The little grand-daughter died at twenty-four. Sainte Beuve remarks on the great impression his grandparents-in-law had made on M. de Marsillac. He was a perfect specimen of the courtiers of Louis XIV. —yet he nevertheless cherished a tenderness for the Port Royalists and gave some of them shelter at Liancourt (which he inherited through his wife), and he always spoke with respect and warmth and tenderness of M. and Mme. de Liancourt.

But to return—M. de Liancourt when in Paris usually made his confession in the Church of St Sulpice, and one day in February, 1655, went there as usual. When he had finished his confession, the priest, M. Picoté, who was hearing him said that M. de Liancourt had not confessed everything; that in his house he was harbouring a heretic in the shape of M. l'Abbé de Bourzeis; that his grand-daughter, Mlle. de la Roche Guyon, was being brought up at Port Royal, and that he was on terms of intimacy with "ces Messieurs."

M. de Liancourt, not feeling that these things came into confession at all, rose up and went quietly away. But from this little bit of would-be orthodoxy on the part of M. Picoté resulted the Provincial Letters.

Sainte Beuve points out that probably M. Olier, the founder of the seminary of St Sulpice, had suggested M. Picoté's action. M. Olier was one of the holiest of men, and had tried to convert M. de Liancourt to his own views. And M. Picoté also was almost a saint;

but, alas, it was not the first nor the last occasion on which holy and saintly men have allowed themselves to persecute their brethren through some fault of the understanding, some desire to be more rigid for truth than anxious to find out "the mind of Christ."

M. de Bourzeis was a learned man, one of the early members of the French Academy, and a theologian. M. de Liancourt had found him out and had given him a room in the Hotel Liancourt at Paris. M. de Bourzeis had written works on the doctrine of grace on the so-called Jansenist side. The Abbé was destined to fall under the displeasure of Port Royal in years to come, for he retracted his opinions and signed the formulary in 1661.

Great was the commotion excited by this affair. It was not in Antoine Arnauld's nature to keep silence from good words any longer, and without losing much time he produced on the 24th of February a letter which bore this ponderous title:—

"Lettre d'un Docteur de Sorbonne à une personne de condition, sur ce qui est arrivé depuis peu dans une paroisse de Paris à un Seigneur de Cour."

Arnauld pointed out what seemed obvious enough—the wrong which the confessor had done to M. de Liancourt. No one but heretics could be refused the Sacraments. Of course he went on to prove that the Port Royalists were most orthodox. "The desire that God gives me more than ever, to finish with all sorts of disputes and controversies, would have prevented my yielding to the request you made to me to tell you my opinion," begins this doughty champion. He certainly had Gascon blood in his veins, and irresistibly reminds us of his contemporaries who in another line of life swaggered up and down Paris, breathing pious hopes that they would not be obliged to fight. Antoine protests a little too much, it would seem.

Naturally, there were many answers, and Arnauld replied by a "Seconde Lettre à un Duc et Pair [M. de Luines]." In this Arnauld threw down the glove to his opponents. The Augustinians *were* orthodox, and

—the Gospels and the Fathers teach us that grace was wanting to St Peter when he failed. Arnauld sent his book to the new Pope, Alexander VII., but that did not prevent his enemies from at once bringing it before the Syndic of the Faculty of Theology of Paris.

The Faculty held numerous meetings from December, 1655, to January, 1656, and on the 18th February Arnauld's letter was censured. He was not allowed to speak, and in vain tried to conciliate his opponents by conceding all that he felt he could conscientiously concede.

In addition, every bachelor licentiate and doctor of the Sorbonne was required to sign the formula which condemned Arnauld's two propositions. Antoine received the blow with characteristic firmness; at the hour when censure was being pronounced he was, as he often related in later years, walking in a gallery in Port Royal, and, as he prayed, there came into his mind St Augustine's words in the commentary on Psalm cxviii. :[1] "Quia nihil persecuti sunt in me nisi veritatem, ideo adjuva me, ut certem pro veritate usque ad mortem."

Antoine Arnauld went into hiding.

It seems disproportionate—even for the seventeenth century—to set a persecution on foot because a man's views on grace did not satisfy the theological faculty of his day. But Antoine had excellent reasons for fearing the Bois de Vincennes or the Bastille, and he concealed himself with M. Le Maître and M. Nicole, who came to bear him company. Antoine had many friends, as is testified by the passionate words of a "lady of quality," of whom Fontaine tells us: "Would you like me to tell you where M. Arnauld is hidden?" said she to some agents of police who were turning her house upside down—"he is very securely hidden, he is hidden here," said she, laying her hands on her heart—"take him if you can."

And now we are face to face with one of the two works by which Pascal is best known.

Pascal was, as we have seen, staying at Port Royal,

[1] Ps. cxix. in our version.

and some days before Antoine Arnauld's final condemnation, the latter, Pascal, Nicole, and one or two others were discussing the affair; a general opinion was expressed that something should be published in Arnauld's defence. Arnauld tried to write a tract or essay, but when he read it to the little circle it fell very flat. Arnauld turning to Pascal, said at once: "Since this won't do, you are young, you might do something." And so Pascal did do something, and the result was the first of the Provincial Letters:

"Lettre escrit à un Provincial par un de ses amis, sur le sujet des disputes présentés de la Sorbonne" is the exact title.

The first letter appeared in January, 1656, and the second and third quickly followed. In all there are eighteen, and few writings have been greeted with such a burst of praise, have been read with such amusement and appreciation, and have maintained so foremost a place among the classics of the world. Masterpieces of irony, and of "le beau style," but masterpieces also of that zeal for righteousness which appears in the later letters in burning words, which the lapse of years and the change in men's ways of thought have in no wise cooled.

Pascal's sister Gilberte, Mme. Périer, wrote of him:—

"He possessed a natural eloquence which gave him a wonderful facility in saying what he wished to say; but in addition he made use of certain rules which up to that time were not generally known, and used them to such advantage that not only did he say that which he wished to say, but he also said it just in the way he wished, and thus his utterance produced the effect which he desired."

Mme. Périer had certainly the critical faculty; what can better express all that we mean by style than her words:—To say what one wishes to say and to say it as we wish to say it, and finally to produce by our written word exactly the effect we wish. These are three steps, those who mount them (and they are few)

have acquired the "style" of which one of our greatest critics once said to a friend, "Have something to say, and say it as clearly as you can. That is the only secret of 'style.'"[1]

And Pascal had this "style" in unsurpassed degree, and in addition he was endowed with imagination and the gift of terrible irony, and the power of personifying his ideas and breathing life into them. Pascal had enlisted for ever the sympathy of the *moral* sense of mankind. The abstruse problems of theology have little interest for most men, but when these problems are translated into the living, breathing, everyday questions which touch us all, by a writer who was not and who never pretended to be a theologian, he who runs may read, and no one who reads with an unprejudiced mind can fail to be delighted intellectually by the extraordinary powers of Pascal, and shocked morally at the astounding system of casuistry which he lays bare before us.

Port Royal owes in great measure its attractiveness and interest to this fact, that Port Royal stood for morality, for truth, for all that makes virtue possible, and gives a man courage to lose his life that he may gain it. And the Jesuits shocked and revolted the moral sense of mankind because their system stood for casuistry of the worst description. In one sense a Christian casuistry is highly necessary, and greatly is it to be wished that a wise, liberal, and holy Christian exposition of this subject were written. Christian ethics, Christian living, right and wrong, are not absolutely simple matters when men have outgrown childhood. But, as M. Boutroux says in his book on Pascal, "They [the Jesuits] were preoccupied with the adaptation of the Eternal Laws of God to the will and the ever-changing needs of individuals."

It is much to be lamented that a society which has for its founder Ignatius Loyola, and which numbers

[1] Quoted of Mr Matthew Arnold, in *Collections and Recollections*, by Mr George Russell.

among its members such men as Ravignan and Tyrrell,[1] should have ever appeared to countenance such a system as Escobar's, or should have been defended by such weak partisans as those who attempted to cross swords with Pascal.

Anything more unlike the Spirit of Jesus than the sayings and the system taught by certain members of the Society cannot be imagined. And there has never been any successful attempt to disprove Pascal's words. Of course Pascal was not entirely fair; a one-sided statement, however clear, is not, and never can be so. The great majority of Jesuits certainly were not disciples of Escobar, nor were they the first or only casuists. As Dean Church says, "the charge was not that the Jesuit institute had not great virtues, but that it had also great sins." For, as Bossuet, who was no friend of Port Royal, said in 1700, the "partie de la morale relachée" was a real danger.

To sum it up. The Lord long ago said to those who would be His disciples that they must take up the Cross, that the way that led to life was narrow. Those who are of the lax and indulgent class of Christians—Jesuits or others—say exactly the contrary.

Pascal's first letter treats first of Arnauld's condemnation. He writes, that naturally so many meetings of the Faculty of Theology led him to believe that something very important was about to be discussed. Not at all. Two questions were discussed. The one of fact ("fait"), the other of "droit."

After a discussion on "fait" and "droit," follows a dialogue between a Jansenist, a Thomist, a Molinist. From one to the other runs poor M. Louis Montalte (the name Pascal takes) to question them on the subject of grace, and what they call "grâce prochaine," or proximate grace. Is this word in the Bible? asked the perplexed inquirer. "No." In the writings of the Fathers or in the Councils, or is it pronounced by any Pope? "No." Is it in St Thomas (Aquinas)? "No."

[1] Since this was written Father Tyrrell has, we believe, withdrawn from the Society of Jesus.

Well then why is it necessary to talk of proximate grace?

"You will either pronounce this word," was the united verdict, "or you will be a heretic, and M. Arnauld is a heretic too."

It is impossible not to be intensely diverted even now by Pascal's first letter. He ends: "Je vous laisse cependant dans la liberté de venir pour le mot de 'prochain' ou non, car j'aime trop mon prochain pour le persecuter sous ce prétexte."

One feels the religious world, the Theological Faculty, ought to have been laughed into sober sense by this and the following letters. But learning, wit, a matchless style, are powerless when those who are to be persuaded are stupid and deficient in charity.

Pascal followed up his first letter very quickly; he was, one sees, full of keen enjoyment. He had discovered new powers, and it had perhaps first dawned on him that he was to be not only Pascal the man of science, but Pascal the writer, the man who was almost the creator of French prose.

No one suspected him to be the author of this letter, which had somewhat vexed the righteous soul of M. Singlin; no doubt Pascal had something too much of the wisdom of this world, quite to satisfy M. de St Cyran's disciple.

The retirement of Arnauld's friends from the Sorbonne was the ostensible reason for the second letter. The next point of dispute, writes Pascal, is the question of sufficing grace, which, the Jesuits hold, is given to all, and a grace is rendered efficacious or the contrary according to whether the will of man receives it or not. The Jansenists do not agree. The new sort of Thomists are thus on the side of the Jesuits, that is, they say "une grâce suffisante" is given to all; but that is not enough, and so efficacious grace is given, but not to all. So sufficing grace does not always suffice.

The writer went on to draw for the three opposing theologians—a Thomist, a Jansenist, a Jesuit, whom he

had managed to bring together—a picture of the Church in a parable.

And just as Pascal, or Louis de Montalte, concludes his letter, he hears that the Censure has been pronounced by one hundred and thirty votes against nine.

Arnauld went into hiding to escape the Bastille, and Pascal, whose letters were carefully read and enjoyed by the Parisians, continued. He invented a reply from the Provincial which is a little bit of playfulness. The letters, says the supposed correspondent, are read and delighted in, not only by theologians but by men of the world, and they are intelligible even to women! And there are quotations from letters, supposed to be written by correspondents of the Provincial, expressing the pleasure which the writers felt.[1]

Even now Pascal's own amusement and enjoyment of this novel situation speak out from the letters; he had boundless stores of intellectual humour, and for once in his rather sad life he permitted himself that agreeable diversion.

M. Sainte Beuve recalls to us one of the *Pensées:* "L'homme est ainsi fait, qu'à force de lui dire qu'il est un sot, il le croit." And so, says the great writer: "Il y a une certaine manière de lui dire ce qu'on est soi même, et ce qu'on vaut, qui lui en dessine et lui en achève l'idée." Pascal has that art to perfection, says Sainte Beuve, and Montaigne and his art have had something to say to Pascal.

In the third letter Pascal considers the question of Arnauld's statement that grace was wanting to St Peter in his fall. This proposition, according to Arnauld's opponents, was audacious, impious, blasphemous, anathematised, and heretical. As the supposed M. de Montalte says, no stronger expressions could be used against Arius or even Antichrist, than those which have been used against a not very perceptible error. For after all Arnauld agrees with the Fathers, and his quotations prove his agreement. So he concludes. It

[1] *Port Royal*, vol ii., p. 66, of 4th edition.

is not M. Arnauld's opinions which are heretical; it is M. Arnauld himself.

And now Pascal takes a new point of departure; hitherto he has simply discussed the question of the hour, and produced some exceedingly brilliant but possibly ephemeral literature. Ephemeral, that is to say, if he had stopped there. But he now ceases to be simply Arnauld's defender; he carries the war into the enemy's country, and however much may be said of his inaccuracies in details, of the unfairness in quotations, of one-sidedness, no really weighty refutation has ever been made of the tenor of his accusation.

Pascal represents himself (the supposed Louis de Montalte) as consulting a former acquaintance, now a Jesuit, for the express purpose of investigating the teaching of that society. It is a terrible revelation. Step by step the amiable Father falls into the trap which Montalte lays, and betrays how cleverly the Jesuits have provided for every conscience, how completely the idea of the venom and corruption of sin is obscured by this system. It is in this letter that we are introduced to Escobar, who wrote the book on Casuistry which Pascal has for ever made infamous.

In this letter Pascal with real dramatic power makes his Jesuit Father unfold the doctrine of "Probabilism," and frankly admits that the Fathers are neglected by his society who only read their own writers.

The Bishop of Exeter in his Bampton Lectures, *Regnum Dei*, has briefly defined Probabilism as "the doctrine that in order to be justified in acting on the less safe side in a moral alternative, it is not necessary to be supported by a preponderance of reasons, but sufficient to have *some* reason for doubting the obligation to act on the safer side."

But what is the impression left on our minds by Pascal and by his opponents alike? This, that the system of Probabilism is simply to bring about a purely legal conception of moral obligation. "To reduce life, duty, the love of God, to the ideas of debtor and creditor, and what is even more serious, to lower the

moral standard of defining sin as disobedience to law—for the reason that God requires obedience to spiritual superiors."

"Lex dubia non obligat," that fatal axiom, "made the evasion of almost every moral and ecclesiastical precept possible."[1]

In odd contrast with this, read the words of a modern Father: "As the vine lives only to produce grapes, so the Church exists and labours only to produce good men; that is, to reproduce the Life of Christ as fully as possible in each particular soul, to bring minds into conformity with the mind of Christ, and hearts into conformity with the heart of Christ."[2]

But Probabilism is not at all concerned with sanctification, and its effects were recognised. Vainly did Innocent XI. endeavour to extirpate the doctrine. To all appearances, and in spite of all the noble utterances of many members of the Society, Probabilism rears its ugly head, and one can only hope that to the Western Church will be granted some Pope with prophetical gifts, who can fight with success on the side of God.

One can recognise the principle underlying the fatal mistake: "Retain as many as possible, drive no one out."

And so the precepts of Christ were watered down to suit those who shirked the offence of the Cross. Those who are willing to follow Christ are encouraged, but for unstable souls, for sinners, for the worldly, for the profligate, an easy way must be found.

Is this the way of Christ? Sinners He ever welcomes. He is "Agnus Dei qui tollit peccata mundi."

But, as has been said over and over again, He saves us *from* sin, not *in* sin. It is a terrible charge, but can it be denied that Probabilism has encouraged a moral scepticism than which no greater disaster can overtake mankind?

Pascal continues for six more letters the account of his conversations with the Father; he concludes the tenth with these words—he has been denouncing the

[1] *Regnum Dei*, p. 341. [2] *External Religion*, p. 74.

extraordinary opinion that men might be excused from loving God :—

"Strange theology of nowadays! They dare to remove the anathema St Paul pronounces against those who do not love the Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Thus, those who throughout their life have never loved God are declared worthy to enjoy Him throughout eternity. Here is the mystery of iniquity accomplished! Open your eyes, my Father, and if you have not been touched by the other aberrations of your casuists, let these last examples hold you back by their extravagance.

"I desire for you and for all your Fathers with all my heart, and pray God that He may vouchsafe to them the knowledge of the false lights which have led them to such precipices, and that He will fill with His Love those who say men may dispense with love."

But now Pascal changes his tactics. He has been ironical ; he has, as it were, enjoyed the process of drawing out the Jesuit.

From the eleventh to the eighteenth letter he now writes to the Society itself. His supposed friend in the country has disappeared. It is in the tones of stern denunciation that he now speaks. He begins by amply justifying himself for the irony, for the scorn which he has poured upon the teaching of the Jesuits ; he continues in the same lofty and terrible manner ; it would seem that after the peroration of the tenth letter quoted above, he has really begun the terrible duel *à outrance*, and all that had come before had been but preliminary fencing. He pours withering scorn on the calumnies and scandals of which the Society has been the author.

"How I pity you, my Fathers, for having had recourse to such weapons. The insults you heap upon me will not shed any light on our differences, and the threats you utter in so many different ways will not hinder me from defending myself. You believe you have strength and security. I believe I have truth and innocence. It is a strange and long warfare in which violence tries to oppress truth. All the efforts of violence cannot weaken truth, they only establish it

more; all the illuminations of truth can do nothing to check violence, and only serve to enrage it to a still greater extent. When force meets force, the stronger destroys the weaker. When arguments are opposed to arguments, the true and convincing arguments scatter and put away arguments which are only vanity and falsehood. But violence and truth have nothing to do with each other. But let no one assert that nevertheless these things are equal; for there is this extreme difference between them, that violence has only a limited career, limited by the command of God, who directs its efforts to glorify that truth which it attacks: whereas truth endures eternally and finally triumphs over its enemies, because just as God himself is eternal and powerful, so is truth."

This is indeed to pass from the defender to the accuser. Even after the lapse of two hundred and fifty years one seems to feel the living, quivering, lofty indignation of the righteous soul vexed by iniquity.

It is incredible that the maxims concerning homicide and various sins which Pascal so fully denounces can ever have been defended by a society even nominally moral, much less Christian.

There is a fine passage in the thirteenth letter: "At the last day all your authors will arise one against another and mutually condemn one another for their frightful extravagances against the Law of Jesus Christ."

Pascal in the fourteenth letter seems to feel the same difficulty which his readers feel in understanding the point of view of the Jesuits; the whole position is so ridiculous:—

"Do see now, my Fathers, in which of these two Kingdoms you are. You have heard the language of the City of Peace and the mystical Jerusalem, and you have heard the language of the City of Trouble, which Scripture calls the spiritual Sodom: which of these two languages do you understand? which do you speak?"

The fifteenth continues the same attack in even more forcible, more scathing words; and the Jesuits

felt them and writhed. One of the most tremendous passages is the one in which he accuses them of the lies and forgeries which they published and actively spread to the disadvantage of the Jansenists.

In the sixteenth letter Pascal sets himself to refute the charges of heresy brought against the Port Royalists. "The Jesuits have had the insolence," he says, "to accuse the whole of that Society of heresy concerning the Sacrament of the Altar." It was not very difficult to refute this, and Pascal does so at great length. One eloquent burst of denunciation, which we quote, will never be forgotten :—

"Cruel, cowardly persecutors, must the most retired Cloisters be no refuge against your slanders? While these holy virgins day and night adore Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament according to their rule, you cease not day nor night to assert that they do not believe either that He is in the Eucharist, or that He is even at the Right Hand of His Father. You would cut them off publicly from the Church while they pray in secret for you and the whole Church. You slander those who have no ears to hear you, no mouth to answer you. But—Jesus Christ, in whom they are hidden, to appear only with Him one day—He can be heard to-day, and His awful and holy voice which terrifies Nature, which consoles the Church. And those who harden their hearts and obstinately refuse to hear Him when He speaks to them as their God, will be compelled to hear him with terror when He speaks to them as their Judge."

Sainte Beuve asks us to realise what it meant to be accused of not believing in the Incarnation and in the Eucharist; it is not difficult for some of us in the English Church to realise the position, and we can enter into Pascal's feelings and make them our own.

The seventeenth and eighteenth letters are answers to the Jesuit, Père Annat, and deal with that perplexing and perhaps to us wearisome question of *Droit* and *Fait.*

Were the condemned propositions contained in the *Augustinus?* This was a question on which Popes

might be mistaken—a question of fact, and sufficient examples are given.

Pascal maintained that they were not literally contained in Jansenius; perhaps they were not, but something extremely like them was contained therein.

In fact, there always have been and always will be the two tendencies in the human mind. Truth lies in a mean—for us relatively; for no human intelligence can grasp the mysteries of the infinite, and Dante's words might profitably have been quoted:

> "State contenti, umana gente, al *quia*
> Chè si potuto aveste veder tutto
> Mestier non era partorir Maria."[1]

Pascal's keen and scientific intelligence lifted him above the confusion of thought which prevented less gifted men from seeing that in God all seeming contradictions meet. Man's free will and God's grace. As Sainte Beuve remarks, Pascal is far removed from Arnauld's dialectics and controversial temper.

Pascal never felt any kind of repentance for the *Provincial Letters*. Why, indeed, should he? There is a righteous indignation and there is a holy anger. Rightly did he make that great appeal in the *Pensées:* "Ad Tuum, Domine Jesu, tribunal appello."[2]

We must now leave Pascal for a short time and trace the fortunes of Port Royal; around that devoted Community the clouds are gathering. But Angélique's motto is "Dominus in Cælo."

[1] *Purgatoria*, canto iii. 37. [2] See Appendix, Notes V. and V*a*.

CHAPTER XII

THE LAST DAYS OF MÈRE ANGÉLIQUE (1656-1661)

THE year 1656 opened gloomily enough for Port Royal. There were rumours that the "Solitaires" were to be driven from their retreat, and the nuns were to be deprived alike of confessors and pupils.

M. d'Andilly, who had been always respected and liked by Cardinal Mazarin, wrote a letter to him on the 13th of February, but Port Royal was not in favour in high places. Mazarin was not a little suspicious of what he thought was, so to speak, an ecclesiastical Fronde; he had experienced sufficient discomfort from the secular Fronde, and was by no means averse to the policy of persecution. And Anne of Austria disliked the Port Royalists heartily. Mme. de Motteville, from the point of view of an untheological mind, sums up the controversy admirably in the first volume of her Memoirs:—

"Every time that men speak of God's Hidden Mysteries, I am astonished by their boldness, and I am delighted that I am not compelled to know anything more than my *Pater*, my *Credo*, and the Commandments of God. About the point of which I speak, I know that it is enough for me to believe that we have nothing which we have not received, that I can do no good thing without God's grace, and that He has given me my free will."

Port Royal and its doings were much discussed at Court. On the 21st of February it became known that the "Solitaires" would be dispersed and the children

withdrawn, and on the 29th of February, Angélique writes to Antoine Arnauld :—

"Well, my dearest Father, if God does not miraculously arrest the course of the persecution, it will become severe in the eyes of men; but I hope that God will temper it by His goodness, and will suffer it to be in proportion to our weakness. Whatever it may be, all that which is temporal is of very little consequence. I entreat you to pray God always that He will grant to us a true faith and a true charity; and if we have those we shall be strong. I confess to you it is rather difficult for me to go away from here where there is much to do, but I am inclined to think I am not of much use. But it is not that which I think of, but I fear that M. Singlin may be taken from us; and in that case I should wish to be at Paris to see him and help our Mother and Mère Agnès, and be helped by them. Our Sisters here fill me with pity.

"However, I long to obey willingly. We must, dearest Father, give ourselves up to everything, and bear these agonies and heartaches which our Lord foretold to His disciples would be their portion in this world. We have not had any such up to now; on the contrary, our troubles have been sent side by side with so much comfort, so much help and even praise, from friends, that they were not real troubles. I think it will not be so henceforth, and that there will be more bitterness, more sense of being forsaken, and of humiliation than in the past. All those are benefits by God's grace . . . after all, dear Father, we must die, and everything else is of little account in comparison with this last trial, which is, however, the gate to eternal blessedness."

Day by day the devoted community waited, and on the 20th of March the "Solitaires" and the boys retired. Nothing seemed safe; but Mère Angélique never lost courage. "If God gives us here faith and love, we shall be too strong." It was a sad time. M. d'Andilly was the last to leave, and Angélique writes to the Queen of Poland :—

"So here are all our 'Solitaires' gone: only my brother D'Andilly is left, and he must go too, as he could not obtain permission from the Queen to stay,

although she does him the honour of being very fond of him. All that could be obtained was that no Commissioner should be sent, on the assurance that obedience would be rendered, as it was. Our valley was very truly a valley of tears; all the "Messieurs" and the children, who were fifteen in number, were so afflicted at leaving this place that it broke one's heart to see them. But one must obey God in all: so they too are submissive to His holy will. We expect the fulfilment of the threats against the confessors, and against the interior of the House, which is my principal care."

She wrote to her nephew, M. Le Maître, a few days later:—

"I hope He will keep those who are gone. They have edified me very much; their sorrow has been such a Christian sorrow, unmurmuring, no discouragement, no vexation. And finally, one could see by their exit, that they had only sought God in their entrance. . . . Our Sisters are what they ought to be, thanks be to God, afflicted, but perfectly quiet. . . . The little girls who had brothers at 'Les Granges,' have wept as much for their brothers as for themselves; they fear their turn will come. . . . Without faith all is unbearable, with faith all is sweet."

A few of the Solitaires remained, and were taken for peasants by the magistrate who visited Port Royal. M. Charles, a priest who had ceased to act as a priest, had been the gardener of Port Royal, and bore himself as such, as did also another who was the vinedresser of Port Royal. He too had been a priest.

From Les Granges (the home of the Solitaires) the magistrate went to the Monastery itself, where Mère Angélique hardly expected him, as she had been told that his visit had nothing to do with her. She knelt for a moment in silent prayer, and then, accompanied by Marie Dorothée de l'Incarnation, who was the Prioress, and by Angélique de St Jean, her niece (one day also to be a famous Mère Angélique), went calmly into the parlour and confronted the officer. He was polite, and

begged her to tell him how it was that "ces Messieurs," the Solitaires, had ventured to reside at Les Granges. Angélique replied that they had come there simply for the sake of religious retreat, and told him the story of M. Le Maître and of some of the others.

After she had finished, the magistrate made her undergo a formal interrogation (the first of many which the unfortunate Port Royalists were to endure). Angélique's story was the same in all points, and the magistrate could not shake her evidence. He tried in vain to make her admit that the suspected "Solitaires" were a Community, or that they said their Offices together, or said Mass in private. None of these terrible crimes had been committed. An invalid indeed had been permitted to say Mass in his own little house, which did not adjoin the others.

Then came another question. Was it true that these most suspicious Solitaires had their meals in common? "Yes, they did," replied Angélique, but so did other priests when they were living together.

"The truth was," the magistrate avowed in a burst of frankness, "the Arnaulds and their friends were too clever; if they had been stupid, people would not have talked so much."

When the examination was over Mère Angélique signed it, and made some allusions to the examination which M. Le Maître had undergone at the hands of M. Laubardement, to which her interrogator replied that he hoped she did not consider him as at all resembling Laubardement.

After this there was a lull. The little Community led its usual life of prayer and of work, in spite of the growing anxiety lest these children, the girls whom they were educating, should be taken from them. After this, M. Daubrai, the magistrate, went on to M. de Bernières at Chesnai. Here he found one of the Port Royal schools in full progress, young Racine among the pupils; M. Wallon de Beaupuis was at their head. There was nothing to say about this, except to praise it.

And now we come to the supreme moment in the

history of Port Royal, the Miracle of the Holy Thorn. Jacqueline Pascal, now Sœur Euphèmie, wrote the account of it to her sister. It appears that on the 15th of March 1656, a priest, one M. de la Potherie, sent to Port Royal a reliquary in which was said to be contained the Holy Thorn, one of the thorns of our Blessed Lord's Crown. The Community received it with profound humility and joy.

One of the children who was being brought up at Port Royal was Marguerite Périer, the daughter of Gilberte, Blaise Pascal's elder sister. Poor little Margot, as she was generally called, a child of eleven, had been suffering for some time from a distressing lachrymal fistula in her eye, which was causing her terrible pain and was also a most afflicting sight to her neighbours. The description of it is sickening. The poor child's eye and cheek became at times excessively swollen, and on the swelling being pressed. matter came out from the eye and the nose, and the swelling disappeared for a time, but soon returned.

The surgeon who was attending her thought that cauterising the fistula was the only hope, and M. Périer was summoned from Auvergne.

At the time of this decision about Margot, the reliquary had been brought to Port Royal, and a Mass was sung in thanksgiving. The Antiphon was "Shew some token upon me for good." After the Mass all the Sisters and the children went in procession to the shrine of the Holy Thorn, and Sœur Flavie, glancing at Margot, was suddenly inspired to apply it to the child's eye. The service was concluded, and no one noticed Margot in any way.

But at night Sœur Flavie heard Margot say to one of the other children, "My eye is cured; it doesn't hurt me." The Sister went up to her, and to her profound astonishment found the swelling had disappeared; the child's afflicted eye was now exactly like the other.

The nuns of Port Royal were always very quiet—Mère Agnès, to whom Sœur Flavie went at once, told

Margot's aunt, and for a whole week the child was watched and many prayers were said.

On the next day, says Fontaine, a week afterwards, writes Sœur Euphèmie, came the surgeon. Fontaine says that M. Périer was present, and gives a dramatic account of the preparations for the horrible operation—of the surgeon's exclamations to the poor sufferer to be patient, and of the good man's surprise when the little girl sat up and showed her eye. Of this, however, Mère Angélique and Jacqueline Pascal say nothing. Mère Angélique's account of the miracle, written to the Queen of Poland, is very striking, but is too long to quote entirely :—

"As the Miracle cannot be denied, some say that of course the relic would work a miracle anywhere. Others say, God has worked it for our conversion. I quite agree with this last opinion, and I wish for our conversion, not from heresy, in which, thanks be to God, we are not, but from many imperfections, of which He will mercifully cure us. We do not really know if God willed to use this miracle, but it seems that some degree of relaxation has resulted. My brother D'Andilly has been allowed to return, and there is no more talk of removing our confessors. At any rate it is a truce permitted by God, to fit us to suffer better when it shall please Him to allow the storm to begin again. In the meantime, we shall go on in prayer to God."

It is interesting, as Sainte Beuve points out, to see how completely Mère Angélique ignores the fact that Margot was a niece of the great Blaise Pascal.

No writer on Port Royal who is at all worthy of attention has suggested any attempt at imposture, but Sainte Beuve considers it to have been a purely natural event, and Mr Beard in his book on Port Royal gives an elaborate medical explanation. He supposes that the pressure of the thorn on Margot Périer's nose burst the abscess from which the child was suffering. It is possible that something of the sort occurred, but we have no difficulty in agreeing with Pascal and all the Port Royalists that God was showing tokens upon

them for good. It does seem strange that unless the illness was much exaggerated it should have left so little trace.

Now one thing is certain. The Port Royalists were never given to exaggerate or make much of illness, and the description of Marguerite Périer's miseries leads one to suppose that, as the doctor said, there was serious, probably irreparable, mischief.

As may be supposed, once the miracle was known, all Paris became extraordinarily excited; people flocked to see the favoured spot and the little girl. Mère Angélique writes to the then Abbess, her very dear Marie des Anges :—

"It is true, dear Mother, that we cannot be sufficiently thankful to God for His goodness to us, and I am in great fear lest we may not evince it to His Divine Majesty by faithfulness to our duties and by self-mortification."

Certainly there must have been an extraordinary revulsion of feeling in the Community. It is difficult perhaps to realise the trembling joy, the thankfulness, with which they received this signal mercy. Marguerite was cured; of this there was no doubt, and the fact was duly attested by four doctors.

It is impossible not to be edified by the reticence and calmness of the Community. One wonders what Marguerite herself felt. She survived all her family, and died a holy death in 1733. She ever regarded herself as having been the subject of a miracle.

The miracle was duly acknowledged by the proper authorities, and a Mass of thanksgiving was sung.

Anne of Austria, always devout, was not a little perplexed and put out. It was a most inconvenient intervention of Divine Providence on behalf of a Community on which Royalty looked with unfavourable eyes. The Queen sent her own surgeon, M. Félix, who confirmed all that the doctors had said.

What was to be done?

M. d'Andilly, always a favourite at Court, was told

that he might return to Port Royal; the other Solitaires quickly came back, attracting as little attention as possible.

M. Le Maître, accompanied by M. du Fossé, took up his abode in a little dwelling apart from the rest, and as he was in very bad health, he so far relaxed his rule that he rose as late as 4 A.M. He and Du Fossé worked at translations, and Du Fossé, who was then a young man of two- or three-and-twenty, gives a charming picture of the relations which existed between them, and of the pains M. Le Maître had always taken with him from the day when he first came as a boy to Port Royal up to this time:—"He looked on me really as a friend, who was to be his companion in solitude." He goes on to say: "We took up our abode in a part quite separated from the other buildings; it might have been a fresh place of solitude in the midst of the desert. This part was called St Anthony, for St Anthony was M. Le Maître's patron; and our little home was at the bottom of a large and pleasant garden."

But an unmistakable sign that the clouds, at any rate for a time, were dispersed, was that Cardinal de Retz appointed M. Singlin as Superior of the two houses of Port Royal.

De Retz, with all his faults, was always a good friend to Port Royal, but, as Racine points out, the Port Royalists never gave him any aid in his political adventures. De Retz himself observed that he never came across any set of people less adapted for political cabals than were the Port Royalists.

De Retz was in Rouen at the time of the miracle of the Holy Thorn, and Sainte Beuve gives a curious account of his supposed relations with the Port Royalists. He points out that De Retz was in disgrace, and a persecuted individual was naturally dearer to the Messieurs of Port Royal than a person in unbroken prosperity; there certainly was some correspondence between Port Royal and the clever but not particularly trustworthy Cardinal. Everything went forward quietly, and that Port Royal was in a little better odour

at Court seemed probable, as no less a person than the Grande Mademoiselle one day paid a visit to M. d'Andilly.

Several members of the devoted Community died about this time, taken away from the evil to come; and the Abbess Marie des Anges and Mère Agnès were both very ill.

M. de Bagnols, the kind protector of Port Royal, who had been, it will be remembered, their host at the time of the Fronde, and who had been always one of the defenders of Port Royal, died in 1657. He was one of those lay examples of piety which give a peculiar interest to Port Royal, and like so many more of the worthiest of Frenchmen, he was of the "Gens de la Robe." He held the post of "Maître des Requêtes,"[1] and was rich and prosperous, and happily married. M. Singlin's sermons were the means of his final conversion, and one of the chroniclers of Port Royal says that "his was no half conversion." He sold, after the fashion of his time, his post, surrendered a large sum of money to which in fact he had no right, and devoted himself to a life of prayer, of good works, not least of which was the careful education of his children. His daughters became the true spiritual children of Port Royal, and suffered for and with the Community in later years.

He bought an estate, Saint Jean des Troux, which was a few miles north of Port Royal, where his boys were brought up; some years afterwards, the youthful Tillemont found a refuge there. Fontaine, always ready to speak in glowing terms of his friends, has a great tenderness for M. de Bagnols, and writes at some length about the holy life and generous almsdeeds of his friend. One of M. de Bagnols' special pleasures was to give dowries to girls who wished to enter Religion. Fontaine quotes a particularly tender and fatherly letter written to one of these, which is too long to give here. M. Le Maître and M. de Bagnols had always been

[1] A Maître des Requêtes was an official who received cases sent up from local Courts before they were sent to the Parliament.—See Appendix, Note VI.

united by a very close friendship, and were never long separate.

Mère Angélique writes to her niece, the second Angélique, about M. de Bagnols' death :—

"I cannot tell you what I feel about M. de Bagnols' death; it seems to me there is no one left in the world. Continually times come to one, when one feels one has no friends; everyone whom I see agrees with me. . . . The whole parish is greatly grieved at his death. . . . He bore himself with such wisdom and charity that he wounded no one, and yet he never wronged truth nor did he ever wrong an enemy."

M. de Bagnols' little girl was at Port Royal with the younger Angélique, and Mère Angélique gives her niece some account of the conversations M. de Bagnols had had with her on the subject of his young daughter, who, it seemed, was apt to be a little idle. Mère Angélique, never too indulgent, pleads for a little relaxation of rule at this time of sadness, and we are pleased to note that she advises Angélique to make the child write often to her brother.

Mère Angélique wrote to Jacqueline Pascal also on the subject of the little girl, and adds a tender word for Sœur Euphèmie herself.

M. de Bagnols was buried at Port Royal des Champs, and M. Hamon (the beloved physician) wrote his epitaph.

It was rightly remarked of M. de Bagnols and of M. de Bernières that they were the "Procureurs généraux des pauvres."

Now we are again in touch with Pascal. The sister of his beloved friend, the Duc de Roannez, the story of whose conversion was told in the last chapter, had resolved to leave all and enter Port Royal. With her, Blaise had had a long correspondence. She was profoundly impressed by the miracle, but she was full of doubt since the censure was pronounced against Arnauld, and pursued by anxieties (not at all unnatural under the circumstances) as to Port Royal's orthodoxy.

As one of Pascal's recent biographers, M. Boutroux, remarks, these letters revealed to him his vocation as a spiritual guide. He could never have been content to be saved alone. "He wished to be the channel by which grace should flow, and he would fain use with all his faculties the light which he had received for others' good."

He reassures the young girl as to Port Royal and as to the signs of a true vocation. Detachment can never, he writes, be accomplished without suffering. He speaks of his own spiritual history. "I try," he writes, "to be vexed about nothing, and to consider everything that happens to be for the best, for sin in its essence is opposition to the will of God; and it seems plain to me that when He makes known His will by events, it would be a sin not to submit oneself to these events. I have learned that there is something good in all that happens, since God's will is stamped on it."

> "And all is right that seems most wrong,
> If it be His sweet Will,"

sang another brother in the Faith, long afterwards.

And then, convinced by his advice, Mlle. Roannez left her home and sought the noviciate of Port Royal, under the name of Sœur Charlotte de la Passion.

But the inconvenient religious zeal of both M. le Duc and of his sister had considerably irritated their mother, who was a great lady, and who was resolved to get her daughter back. Mère Agnès tells the story: it seems that another sister, already a nun of another order, doubtless inspired with a good deal of animus against Port Royal, came with the order of release—a *lettre de cachet* was a weapon not infrequently used when children gave their parents trouble. Mère Agnès writes to a nun at Tard, November, 1657:—

"I must tell you of our great sorrow in the departure of Mlle. de Roannez, who has been torn from us with extreme violence, her mother being absolutely unwilling to listen to any of her reasons or requests. It is impossible to describe the grief of this excellent young

gentlewoman; no doubt she might have softened her mother, had it not been for a sister who is a Benedictine nun, and she was present at this good work! . . . She (Mlle. de Roannez) only begged one favour, and could not obtain it, which was that she might spend her 'fête' here, . . . but the nun would not allow it, and said nothing but 'No, no, you must come out of this.' The poor girl cried almost bitterly and let these words escape: 'How wretched I am to have such a sister.' An officer had come with the ladies, who had brought us a *lettre de cachet* three months ago that we were to give up Mlle. de Roannez whenever her mother demanded her. . . . We were in great sorrow up to yesterday, when she sent an old governess of hers to ask us to send her breviary and her devotional books, and to tell us about her. . . . M. Singlin is much moved, . . . he said to her he was more afraid of her being angry than of her being unfaithful."

Mère Agnès relates in the same letter how in a fit of indignation, Mlle. de Roannez, poor little lady, had cut her hair short to prove her irrevocable determination to be a nun.

Mlle. de Roannez would not consent to live any life but that of a religious. So long as Pascal was alive she was able to be firm. But some years later she married, and drew upon herself Antoine Arnauld's fiercest animadversions. He was not so gentle as Dante, who merely assigns to the gracious and beautiful Piccarda, who too had been forced to leave her convent and marry, a place in a lower heaven than was granted to the great ascetics, and made her assure the poet pilgrim of the perfect happiness of all in Heaven.[1]

On Pascal the miracle of the Holy Thorn had an enormous effect. Some of his later Provincial Letters appeared after the great grace given to his family, and he probably had it in his mind when he wrote the wonderful burst of denunciation in the sixteenth of his Provincial Letters: "Cruels et lâches persecuteurs."

Port Royal was soon to suffer a greater loss. The mightiest of the Solitaires, Antoine Le Maître, who for

[1] *Paradiso*, iii. 83-90.

some twenty years had lived the life of prayer, of self-abnegation, of obscurity, died in 1658. For some months before his last illness he had been drawn to even greater spirituality; some stray words spoken in a religious conference struck him with singular force, and, as he was accustomed to do, he opened his heart to the younger Angélique, his cousin, who advised him to speak to his aunt, Mère Angélique, a person of whom he stood in considerable awe.

With some difficulty he overcame his shrinking and spoke to the Mother of the extraordinary impression produced on him by the words that had been used. "Do not be half-dead and half-alive," someone had remarked, "but wholly dead to yourself and alive to God." There seems nothing particularly fresh or new in the words, but as so often happens, in the spiritual life especially, some word often heard before, or some truth always received, suddenly becomes as it were quick, keen, sharp, and meant for the particular soul which has responded to the word.

The Mother advised him to make a fresh beginning. In these fresh beginnings consists perfection; and he was to go to M. Singlin, who, like St Cyran, was the director *par excellence*, and again renew his repentance. M. Le Maître seems to have taken his aunt for a director—he begged of her to see him again at the end of a month, and to point out to him any failings she might have noticed in him in time past. He saw M. Singlin, and a great peace and longing for utter self-surrender possessed him.

Du Fossé nearly became a monk at the Abbey of St Cyran, which was a little north-west of Châtillon; he writes pleasant descriptions of the Abbey.

M. de Barcos, St Cyran's nephew, seemed to Pierre severe and rigid. Fossé found various people there whom he knew; a son of Madame de Frêsle, and also a son of M. des Landres of Rouville. But the severity was too much for him, and he found that M. de Barcos thought the life of the Port Royal Solitaires was by no means sufficiently austere. M. Guilbert urged

him to go back to Port Royal. He gives a most amusing description of his growing dislike to the monastery, especially as there were quantities of vipers which frightened him horribly. M. Singlin met him at Orleans, and they returned to Port Royal together.

M. Le Maître received Du Fossé with much affection but no surprise; he knew that the youth had no vocation for the life at St Cyran.

They worked happily together at the Lives of the Saints. Du Fossé collected the Memoirs of the Sieur de Pontis, who had been a soldier of fortune, and who was now a Solitaire at Port Royal. Fossé's letter to his father when Le Maître died, is most touching.

Le Maître took Fossé's hand one day of his illness, and said:

"I assure you, dear brother, I have only one regret, and that is to forsake you at a time when perhaps I can be useful to you and when God has joined us to each other so closely." Du Fossé sobbed out—what could *he* do? but Le Maître said that De Saci would be his friend; and then he drew the young man's hand to him and tenderly kissed it, and told him to go to the Holy Communion and pray for them both.

Poor Du Fossé was like many another, terribly sad that his beloved one was in danger of being unable to receive the last Sacraments; but he was spared his trial. Le Maître recovered consciousness, and for the last time De Saci heard his brother's confession and gave him "le pain des anges qui devait lui donner des forces pour arriver comme le prophète jusqu'à la montagne du Seigneur," says Du Fossé.

Le Maître died in November, 1658. "Le grand orateur de la langue Française parle maintenant le langage des anges," someone said.

Antoine Le Maître is a great figure. He obeyed the call, he was not disobedient to the Heavenly Vision as he saw it. The lives of those who go out to do Christ's work in this sad world seem more attractive, more beautiful, to some of us; but to each one his work and his place; in every age it is a blessed thing if

there be found souls who are called to the vocation of prayer.

We feel that the religion of Port Royal by no means represents all the beauty of Catholic life; it is too self-centred; the note of individualism is too strongly accentuated. But to every age are given the saints whom it specially needs, and this note of austerity and of penitence sorely needs to be struck in all ages.

The Port Royalists felt M. Le Maître's death terribly. M. de Saci, the grave, restrained younger brother, to whom Antoine Le Maître had once found it difficult to make his confession, was plunged in grief. Mère Agnès could scarcely recite her office.

"The righteous are taken away from the evil to come." As one looks on the sad history of Port Royal, and one sees the gathering clouds, one feels how true this is of those called to rest before the worst of the storm fell.

And another was now to follow, Mère Angélique's most beloved child, now her Mother in Religion, Marie des Anges. She who had left Maubuisson in the hope of being allowed to take the lowest place, had meekly accepted the highest. She had lately been re-elected for a second period of three years, but a presentiment of death was upon her, and as M. Le Maître had done, she too made a general confession, a renewal of conversion.

The Advent of 1658 came, and the Mother lay down on her bed of pain (it was found that she had an abscess in her side), saying in answer to some discussion on the relative benefit of a long or of a short illness before death, that she on the whole thought a sharp, sudden illness to be preferred, as long sickness wore out the invalid and was a great strain on spirituality.

The Mother after some days asked for the Sacraments; and it is touching to read of the really great religious humbling herself to ask forgiveness of her children, if in any way she had been hasty, impatient, exacting. One of the Sisters who loved her very much asked, "Are you really very ill, Mother?" "Yes, my

child, very ill; but that will pass—we shall meet in God, in a way in which we have not met before; in His Light we shall see Light."

Another Sister asked a question rather characteristic of the Port Royal attitude of mind—was she afraid? "Perhaps I shall be afraid when the time comes," she said; "I am not frightened now, I am in the hands of God," she went on, as a weeping Sister implored her to think of those whom she was leaving. "I will not refuse His work, if it be His will to keep me here." And as the hours passed by and her breathing grew more difficult, she said to her dearly loved child Sœur Candide, "I am very ill, . . . it will soon be over, . . . we have been so long together, . . . it is time now to part, . . . we shall be together again," and then the touching request for forgiveness, deprecated almost passionately by the poor nun.

M. Singlin brought her extreme unction. The next day at midnight, as she gave Agnès Arnauld the "Dominus custodiat introitum tuum et exitum tuum," she continued, "quod in te incepit ipse perficiat ad suam gloriam et tuam salutem," with an evident presentiment that Agnès would be her successor. The struggle was a long one, but to the very last the sweet confidence and peace of soul never left her. One word escaped more than once, "Ten years ago God delivered me," thinking of the heavy burden she had laid down when she left Maubuisson.

Marie des Anges is, next to Angélique and Agnès, the most remarkable woman of the first period of Port Royal. She had much of the administrative power of Angélique, with more tenderness, possibly more simplicity in her single-hearted love of God. She was buried at Port Royal des Champs.

Agnès Arnauld was elected Abbess in the place of Marie des Anges. Her lot was cast in evil days. Angélique writes:—

"The satisfaction of our Sisters and the way in which they recognised God's mercy to them in giving you to them, ought to console you, dear Mother, by the assur-

ance that God, who increases His gifts in those who have real gratitude, will multiply His aids to you to direct them, and will give us docility to obey you most truly. They will not cease to pray for you, that God will preserve your bodily life, so that you will help them to strengthen and purify the life of their souls."

Agnès is in some way more fascinating and more attractive than her great sister. It was she who drew to Port Royal those great ladies, Mme. de Sablé, Mme. de Longueville; it was she who corresponded with Princesse de Guémenée, that rather scapegrace friend of Port Royal. And Agnès also was endowed with that peculiar grace of unction; on the nuns whom she trained when she was Mistress of the Novices, and on the Community in general after she was elected Superior, she had an extraordinary influence. She was especially able to instruct in conferences, in the Chapters held by the Community.

One of the historians of Port Royal says: "Recollection was painted in Mère Agnès's face. Her presence alone inspired everyone. Only to see her, was to be attracted to good," and the historian goes on to describe the difference between the two illustrious sisters. He says: "'Les religieuses,' in their *Relations*, remark that Mère Angélique had a great quickness which plunged one into depths and then raised one the next moment, and that Mère Agnès was always quiet, and could be firm, gentle, recollected, and active."

Agnès possessed a touch of imagination and of mystic devotion which wins for her letters a place in literature. M. Faugère, in his beautiful preface to the edition of Agnès's letters, for which all lovers of Port Royal must be for ever grateful, says that it is necessary to read Agnès's letters in order fully to understand the real spirit of Port Royal. It was a moral regeneration, "demandée avant tout à l'inspiration directe de celui dont l'Esprit Souffle où il veut."[1]

No one can read the two volumes of her letters without realising for what the Community really lived,

[1] Faugère, *Introduction aux Lettres de la Mère Agnès.*

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[*To face p.* 266.

and suffered, and prayed, and died. It is in Agnès and in her letters, and in M. de St Cyran, M. Singlin, M. de Saci's exhortations, in Fontaine and in Lancelot, that we must look for the justification of Port Royal. Not in "controversies de grace," in weary discussions, "du Droit et Fait," not even in Pascal, certainly not in Antoine Arnauld and his controversial writings. Mère Angélique had force of style but less grace, less fervour, and less of the subtle art which pervades Agnès's letters, and no touch of the almost poetic charm which occasionally characterises her writing. They were complements to each other, and both were indeed great women who were called to remarkable vocations.

CHAPTER XIII

PASCAL'S "PENSÉES"—HIS DEATH (1656-1662)

THE work by which Pascal is chiefly known in England is the fragmentary collection known as his *Pensées.*

It was when he was experiencing the intense joy which the miracle of the Holy Thorn brought to him, that he conceived the idea of writing a book for the express purpose of confuting unbelievers.

Pascal's last years, from 1657 until his death in 1662, were spent in retirement, in meditation on the projected work. His almost unbroken ill-health made it nearly impossible for him to do any continuous work, and to this we owe the notes written on scattered leaves—the *Pensées.*

Pascal used these years as a veritable and true Purgatory.

> "Il monte
> Dove l'umana spirito si purga
> E di salire al Cielo diventa degno."

His health prevented him from doing anything more than jotting down, or at times dictating, thoughts on the great problems which continually occupied his mind. The *Pensées* are not in any way an apology or a defence of Jansenism.

In considering the book which has powerfully attracted so many minds, has elicited so many conflicting opinions, and has been criticised from so many different points of view, we must always remember a fact which seems to be strangely overlooked

by some of Pascal's critics, that the *Pensées* date from that period of exaltation and of fervent faith produced by the miracle of the Holy Thorn.

The *Pensées* have had a chequered career. After Pascal's death, his sister and brother-in-law, M. and Mme. Périer, proposed to publish the numerous fragments of his projected work which he had left, with as few comments, as little alteration, as might be, and to preface them by an admirable sketch of Pascal's life written by Mme. Périer.

But less wise counsels prevailed. Antoine Arnauld and the Duc de Roannez insisted on editing the work in a much more drastic fashion, and in 1670 the first edition appeared with a preface by M. Etienne Périer, the nephew. The Duc de Roannez had the chief share in the work of preparing this new edition, but Antoine Arnauld and several others aided him. The Port Royalists are greatly to be excused for their extreme caution and the liberty they allowed themselves in editing Pascal. The peace of the Church had, when the book appeared, closed, it was fondly hoped, the long quarrel between Jesuit and Jansenist, and it was desirable to soften some, or omit others, of Pascal's strong expressions. As M. Victor Cousin says, what in 1660 or 1661 had been a courageous defence, might well seem in 1669 or 1670 a needless attack. And indeed the book ran some risk of being suppressed by Péréfixe, then Archbishop of Paris.

M. Cousin points out that the editors really did Pascal an ill-turn, not because they completed a phrase, or inserted a word, but because they altered Pascal's style, and "sous prétexte de l'éclaircir, l'énervent, l'allongent, l'allanguissent, pour ainsi dire. . . ."

It is to M. Victor Cousin and to M. Faugère that we owe the true text of Pascal. M. Cousin pointed out the extraordinary liberty which had been taken with the text, and MM. Faugère, Havet, and Molinier have produced editions which give us the true Pascal. Those of Faugère, Havet, Molinier, Michaut, and Brunschvicg are the best.

Few indeed of the great books of the world have exercised a more profound influence upon thinking men.

This little volume of *Thoughts*, written at various times and unconnected by their author, is one of those immortal books which are ever fresh, because their style and their subject-matter never grow old. For Pascal is the author to whom a certain class of lofty souls always turn: those on whom the sadness of the world weighs, those who feel the pressure of the problem of the destiny of man. Æschylus, Lucretius, à Kempis, and many more since his time, many a sad pilgrim of modern days, are akin to him.

A great controversy has raged around the *Pensées*.—Was Pascal really struggling in the throes of scepticism?

It seems to us that there is but one answer. Pascal's thoughts had their origin in his passionate longing to make the careless, unbelieving world around *believe*, to confute the unbeliever, to arouse the careless, to awaken the slumberer. For what after all first gave to him this desire?—The miracle of the Holy Thorn. In the deepest gratitude to God for a special mercy vouchsafed to his own family first of all, and through that family to the Community which he loved and venerated, he planned his "apology." There may have been in earlier days, as we have seen, intervals of lukewarmness, of spiritual dryness, of over-preoccupation with the things of this world, but—there was not any period of unbelief; his conversions were times of renewal of purpose, and it is then that "what was a speck expands into a star." Faith became his—the supernatural gift of God.

Pascal is stern, bracing, and ascetic. The misery of man, his inability to help himself, he lays this before us in unmeasured language. But Pascal by no means bases his projected apology on the ruins of man's reason. Certainly neither his confessor de Saci nor Antoine Arnauld would have sanctioned such a work. He does not care greatly for scientific proofs, nor think

them, apart from Revelation, of any intrinsic value. "He knew," says one of his modern commentators, M. Droz, "that in the order of nature, beyond the simple observation of facts and of laws, the science of to-day will be reformed and superseded, partly abolished to-morrow." Years before, Cardinal Baronius, speaking of Galileo, said that " L'Ecriture Saint nous apprend comment on va au ciel et non comment va le ciel."

We have gone far beyond Paley and his watch, and arguments from design, perhaps to find in the doctrine of Evolution only a deeper proof of the Immanence of God, and, as a brilliant and thoughtful writer has put it: "We believe that mind is the ultimate reality behind the world, not because A fits into B, as if B were a problem which the supreme mind had solved; but because, on the whole and in the whole, there is a radical correspondence of parts, and because the thing as a whole is a working whole, working in a way which we cannot but recognise as in its deepest meaning reasonable.[1]

And, again, Pascal thinks little of metaphysical proofs; in this of course he lays himself open to criticism. A theology without metaphysics is impossible. But he is right in judging this kind of proof inaccessible to the ordinary mind.

In a book we think not sufficiently read or valued, Dr Moberly, whose death was one of the greatest possible losses to thought and to religion, says:—

"He to whom metaphysics is nonsensical or unimportant cannot have any high rank as a theologian. Theology which cannot interpret to its generation the light of Divine revelation on the postulates and character of thought, or which has even to cling to its theological dogmas in despite of admitted principles and requirements of thought, is at once theology narrowed, departmental, inadequate, and is too often felt to be, in greater degree or in less, theology dying. I am far from saying this in all cases of the private Christian."[2]

[1] P. N. Waggett, *Science and Faith.*

[2] *Reason and Religion*, p. 63.

Reason, however, according to Pascal, is the basis of religion, although it does not penetrate into it; he would, we think, heartily agree with Dr Moberly, who says a little further on than the above-quoted passage:—

"Revelation may outstrip reason, and outstripping may often illumine, may sometimes perplex it. But that which really contradicts reason becomes an impossibility. We may believe what we cannot understand or even what appears to contradict our reason—so long only as we have good reason to believe that the contradiction, however apparent, is not real. That was, as it seems, the precise position of the disciples at the close of the sixth chapter of St John."[1]

"If we submit use to reason, there will be nothing mysterious or supernatural in our religion. If we outrage the principles of reason, our religion will be absurd and ridiculous," writes Pascal. "Does not Pascal," writes M. Droz, "render to reason the most solemn homage that could be rendered to it by any Christian, when he calls on it to verify religion?"

By "reason," what do we mean.

There is ambiguity.

Dr Moberly says, again to quote *Reason and Religion*:—

"There is, in fact, nothing but to recognise frankly that 'reason' must, in the nature of things, continue to be used in two divers senses. That which is abstracted from the moral and the spiritual must be still the 'merely' or 'distinctly' rational; but yet, at the very same time, the moral and the spiritual must be recognised as unreservedly and even more importantly rational than the rational."[2]

And this is why Christianity, which ultimately satisfies our moral and spiritual needs, can never be contrary to, or be set in antithesis to reason.

What, then, is Pascal's method?

First—he shows us the supreme necessity of moral earnestness. Certainly this is a lesson sorely needed

[1] *Reason and Religion*, p. 65.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 46.

in modern days. He dwells on the extraordinary temper which so possesses the minds of men that they can treat the questions of God, their own souls, the possibility of a future life, as open questions.

"Let them learn at least what is the religion they attack before they attack it," is a passionate cry which might well be re-echoed to many of those who in later days have "thought scorn of that pleasant land, and given no credence to His Word." Pascal's description of man's misery, of his frailty, his insignificance and his greatness, is never likely to be forgotten. "L'homme n'est qu'un roseau, mais c'est un roseau pensant," has passed into a classical quotation.

But did he dwell too much on that misery? was he too deeply plunged in pessimism? No, not if we consider unredeemed, unregenerate, human nature.

For, man's degradation, his greatness and his littleness, showed Pascal that Christianity holds the key to the enigma. "Man has two positions only which can satisfy reason.—1. The position of a Christian who has found God and is serving Him. 2. The position of a seeker after God,"[1] says Newman.

Pascal passionately adjures those who are in neither case to play the part of one who takes a wager. In fact, he says, man can keep staking on the game of life: "Il faut parier; cela n'est pas volontaire, vous êtes embarqué."

It seems a strange way of looking at life, and yet how true it is that faith, the committal of our souls to God, *is* a great venture, and an act of courage. Pascal makes a high appeal; he shows in his own matchless eloquence how infinite is the gain, and that to obtain the gift of faith, moral conditions are indispensable. This is Pascal's great argument; it can never grow old-fashioned:—

"You desire to reach faith, but you don't know the road; you would cure yourself of unbelief, and you ask for remedies. Learn of those who once were bound as you are bound; who now stake all their possessions;

[1] Newman's *Apologia*, p. 242. Eversley Edition.

these are they who know the way you desire to follow; these are they who are cured of the sickness of which you long to be healed. Follow the way they followed; they acted as if they believed," etc.

Another more recent thinker has said the same:—

"Try the only experiment available—the experiment of faith. Do the doctrine, and if Christianity be true, the verification will come, not indeed immediately through any cause of speculative reason, but immediately by spiritual intuition.

"Only if a man has faith enough to make this venture honestly, will he be in a just position for deciding the issue. Thus viewed, it would seem that the experiment of faith is not a fool's experiment, but, on the contrary, so that there is enough *prima facie* evidence to arrest serious attention, such an experimental trial would seem to be the rational duty of a pure agnostic.

"It is a fact that Christian belief is much more due to doing than to thinking, as our Lord prognosticated in the New Testament. 'If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.'"[1]

And Pascal goes on to show that religion appeals to the whole man. "The heart has its reasons which reason knows not; this is seen in a thousand instances."

He then goes on to speak of the proofs of Christianity. It is in Christ that Pascal finds the solution. This is what a man who is as yet sitting in darkness and the shadow of death might say:—

"This is what I see, and it is this which disquiets me. I look around on every side and see nothing but twilight. Nature offers me nothing that is not a cause of doubt, of uneasiness. If I saw nothing in Nature which in any way implies a Creator, I could make up my mind not to believe in one. If I saw on every side the traces of a Creator, I would rest in peace in the Faith; but as I see too much to make it possible to deny, too little to make me certain (of a Creator), I am in a pitiable state. A hundred times I have wished that if there is a God who upholds Nature, she would

[1] Romanes, *Thoughts on Religion.*

unmistakably indicate Him; but if the traces she points out of Him are but deceits, she would destroy them—that she would say all or nothing."

This is an excellent example of Pascal's dramatic method. He is able to see from the point of view of other souls than his own.

Natural religion fails. The only refuge of the soul is Christianity. Pascal also naturally pushes aside all other religions. The study of comparative religion has only very lately made us really believe St Paul's words (Acts xvii. 24, 25, 26): "The God that made the world and all things therein, He, being Lord of Heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is He served by men's hands, as though He needed any thing, seeing He Himself giveth to all life, and breath, and all things." Pascal brings forward the proof of a true religion. Christianity is founded on a preceding religion, and he gives us a masterly sketch of Jewish history. He bids his readers note the wonderful way in which the Jews had been preserved; the lofty morality of the prophets; the fulfilment of the real spiritual meaning of the law and the prophets by Jesus Christ. Pascal sees what has been also noticed by a modern writer. Whereas other nations looked sadly back to their golden age over a long series of successive declensions, Israel alone "placed its golden age in the future," says the present Bishop of Exeter in his description of the Jewish ideal of the Kingdom of God.[1]

Of course, criticism has come in to alter our views on the Old Testament. But how little after all does criticism affect the view of a Divine Idea, of a Divine Education, of a Divine Purpose? Even so advanced a critic as Professor George Adam Smith admits this:—

"It is very evident . . . . that the essence of the truth about God's love and the perfection of that love in suffering, which Christ manifested, and which is the

[1] *Regnum Dei*, p. 12.

glory of the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation, was already conceived and expressed by the prophets."[1]

In details, Pascal would in the light of modern research have changed, but not in principle. The Old Testament contains the types of future joy, and the New contains the means by which it is attained. "L'Ancien Testament contenait les figures de la joie future, et le Nouveau contient les moyens d'y arriver. Les figures etaient de joie; les moyens de pénitence; et néanmoins l'agneau pascal etait mangé avec des laitues sauvages, 'cum amaritudinibus.'" And then comes the contemplation of the Gospel itself, of Jesus Christ Himself.

He contrasts material and intellectual greatness as we see them on earth with the moral pre-eminence of Jesus Christ. No criticism can affect this—the empire, the dominion the Lord has acquired over souls. No one of our Lord's disciples has ever uttered more fervent bursts of adoration, no one has ever more completely flung himself and all his being at Jesus' feet.

"I hold out my arms to my Deliverer, whom the prophets foretold for four thousand years, and Who came on earth at the time and amid the circumstances which had been foretold; by His grace I wait for death in peace, in the hope of being eternally united to Him, and live joyfully whether it be in the good He sends me, or in the ill which He sends me for my welfare, and which He has taught me to bear for His sake."

Vinet says in his *Etude sur Pascal*, that there is a method of apology or defence of Christianity which attacks the sceptic rather than defends the Christian, in which "Religion does not present herself so much under the aspect of an advocate, but rather under that of a judge; the mourning robe of one who pleads is exchanged for the toga of the magistrate; the 'apologia' is not only a justification, but passes into praise, homage,

[1] *Lectures on Modern Criticism*, p. 176.

adoration, and the monument which is erected is not a citadel, but a temple."

Pascal has some profound thoughts on God such as He is revealed to us in Christ; for one of Pascal's most deeply meditated and systematic conclusions is that without Christ we can know nothing of the Nature of God. "All those who seek God outside Jesus Christ, and who stop at Nature, either they find nothing to satisfy themselves, or they attain a means of knowing God and serving Him without a Mediator; they arrive at Atheism or Deism, which the Christian Religion almost equally abhors," says Pascal. Pascal of course considers miracles from his own point of view, and nowadays our standpoint is a little changed; and yet, as has been said by a recent and critical writer: "We must very narrowly limit the area in which it is reasonable to conclude the possibility that extraordinary and unaccountable events may have occurred"[1]; and indeed perhaps it is less difficult for us of this age to admit the possibility of *seeming* suspension of natural laws.

Yet we who believe in the religion of Christ rather believe the miracles because of Christ, than Christ because of miracles.

Pascal considered that there are three distinguishing marks of true religion: perpetuity, holiness, miracles—and Christianity has these.

Pascal's arguments remind us as we read them of Bishop Butler. A writer in a striking essay[2] says: "Both these great writers insist that all things form a connected scheme too wide and deep for us to comprehend; both are emphatic on man's ignorance; both address unbelievers, and prefer to offer, not demonstrative evidence, but something, and what bears on practice rather than theory. Both dwell on the power of habit, and recommend the formation of habits of religion; both regard the Gospel as a remedial interposition sent into a fallen world; both consider miracles and prophecy (especially the latter) to be the proper proofs of the

[1] Rashdall in *Contentio Veritatis*.

[2] The *Guardian* of 7th November, 1900.

Gospel; both insist that a moral test for the searcher is provided by the very insufficiency (logically speaking) of the evidence; both take a grave and awful view of life, have a lofty and fervent moral tone, lead up to the Cross; both put aside metaphysical and teleological arguments; both mention Judaism as a cardinal piece of evidence; both point out the purpose of the visible Church as set up to be an abiding witness through the ages; both ask the doubter to put the question to himself, 'What is safest? What practically is my interest?' both are the product, not of the study or the seminary, but of conversation and the experience of life."

Pascal's *Pensées* are but a brilliant fragment of a never accomplished work, but they are a great contribution to thought. The distinguished opponent of Christianity—of the eighteenth century—found Pascal his chief adversary. Voltaire's notes, brilliant as they are, read to us as somewhat shallow, captious, and arrogant. We of this age have set up, at any rate, different "idols of the market-place," and Voltaire does not speak our language. But—Pascal does not grow old-fashioned, nor out of sympathy with us, with our difficulties, our problems, our moral sickness; and so long as men still ask the questions propounded long ago by the author of Ecclesiastes, so long will they turn to this book of fragments, so lofty, so intense, so faultless in style, so keen in its insight, so unsparing in its moral requirements, so bracing in its exhortations, so passionate in its appeals.

Pascal's *Thoughts* are to be regarded in another aspect. As Dean Church pointed out in his sermon on Pascal, they can be treated as a companion to the devout life. The *Pensées* have their value and their place among the books which are profitable for growth in devotion, in the true life of the soul.[1]

"For Pascal's view" (to quote from Dean Church) "of religion rises out of these solemn and unfathomable depths, the abyss of life and pain and death, the abyss of sin and ignorance and error, the abyss of redemption

[1] *Pascal and other Sermons*, p. 5.

and of God's love." It is a book which braces us up to look the facts of life in the face. It is right that at times Christian souls, safe in the shelter of the Father's house, untroubled by doubts, should know, at least vicariously, of what some noble souls have had to bear.

"Le silence éternel de ces espaces infinis m'effraie." It is good that we should ponder on these perplexities and problems which are implied in these words. For to think of, and to sympathise with the intellectual sorrows of the world, to know something of the pain of doubt, does teach us to avoid littleness, pettiness in our religion.

We are so apt to degenerate if we allow either the intellectual or the practical sides of religion to be turned quite out of sight. We become formalists, intent on the outward, on correctness, on the details of ritualism, on external rules; or we become sentimental, content with a shallow pietism, with glib repetition of shibboleths.

Pascal is the type of mind, sympathy with whom, study of whom, will purify and deepen those who learn from him.

As we turn over the pages, we constantly meet sentences which tear away the complacency which possibly may wrap us round, as to our beliefs and our position in the scheme of things, and which pull us back to the most elementary truths.

And if we take Pascal for our guide, what are the points of his teaching which strike us most?

Surely as we turn over the few pages of the little volume, we are taught the supreme earnestness, the awful seriousness of human life; we learn from him to see something on the one hand of the extraordinary importance of human life, of the few years in which we may make our choice; on the other, of the extraordinary non-importance of much of what the world deems all-important.

Again, as we have said, we are brought face to face with problems of life. But besides these we surely learn the truth of Browning's line: "How very hard it

is to be a Christian." We see the aspect of Christian life which, however much we know of peace and of joy, can never be ignored, of mortification, of self-denial, of sternness. This is needed now as much as ever. We are not to live for ever in a panic, but if ever we feel that life is smooth, devotion easy, and the ugly side of life well out of sight, Pascal's severity, Pascal's overwhelming sense of the seriousness of life may well brace and reprove us.

The characteristic of Pascal's religious life was an intense, passionate devotion to our Blessed Lord, and in Him and through Him to His Church, to His Sacraments.

"Jesus Christ is the object of all (things), and the centre to which everything gravitates. He who knows Him, knows why all things are."

There is a deep self-abasement running through the *Pensées* which is the mark of all saints through the ages. As we ponder on his deeply-rooted conviction of man's nothingness and of God's greatness, we feel we are breathing the atmosphere of David, of St Paul, of Augustine, of many another.

Pascal is too much occupied with great elementary truths not to see the folly of controversy on Sacraments :—

"I do hate these follies—not believing in the Eucharist, etc. If the Gospel is true, if Jesus Christ is God, what difficulty is there? The last work for reason is to know that there is an infinity of things which are beyond and above reason."

How grimly would Pascal have smiled, how passionately would he have denounced the folly of modern sceptics who find prayer unreasonable, or even an impertinence.

To read Pascal, is to have brought home to one the extraordinary folly of measuring things divine by human measures, prayer tests, *e.g.*, such as have been gravely proposed by eminent men of science. How Pascal would have brought his delicate irony, his passionate scorn to bear on these.

And yet how far removed he is from any weakness, anything like superstition.

"The method of God, Who arranges all things gently, is to impart religion to the intellect by reason and to the heart by grace," he says; and in another place, "To let piety run into superstition is to destroy it."

It is interesting as one reads the *Pensées* to notice Pascal's deep spiritual insight. For instance, how true are these two *Pensées*:—

"The circumstances (of life) in which it is most easy to live according to the world are the most difficult in which to live according to God, and the reverse is true. Nothing is so difficult as the religious life according to the world; nothing according to God so easy. According to the world, nothing is easier than life when one is in a good position and has wealth; nothing is more difficult than to live in possession of these and yet to be in accordance with God, not being attached to them and loving them."

Again, "A person told me one day that after confession he felt great joy and trust; another said he remained fearful. I think one good (man) could be made out of these two. Each needed something the other possessed. This is true of many other things."

Pascal speaks in clear tones of the struggles that await us in our Christian life.

After speaking of the war in our members, he goes on:—

"The most cruel war which God can make against men in this life is to leave them without that war which He came to bring them. 'I am come to bring war,' He said."

How many people imagine that to be an Agnostic is to live a strenuous life in the thick of conflict. They imagine that the Christian life is soothed and quieted, that it is a sort of intellectual slumber.

But the saints of God have told us, and no one more clearly than Pascal, that it is when we have made our choice, when we have dared to put behind us such

questions as the Immortality of the Soul, of the Existence of God, the truth of the doctrine of the Incarnation and all that it implies, that our real life begins—a life of conflict, indeed, of incessant strain, but the life of the man who has put away childish things, and who through conflict, through strain, through upward yearnings comes "dal martiro a questa pace," to a country "whose air is very sweet and pleasant, the way lying directly through it. . . . They heard continually the singing of the birds, and saw every day the flowers appear on the earth, and heard the voice of the turtle in the land."

"In this country, the sun shineth night and day; wherefore this was beyond the valley of the Shadow of Death, and also was out of the reach of Giant Despair, neither could they *from this place so much as see Doubting Castle.*"[1]

Yet this pleasant land is only reached by a life of incessant struggle, and men pronounce glib verdicts on the Faith, and hold themselves aloof from it, and declare themselves in favour of a sort of crude Agnosticism, not because they are really intellectually bewildered, but because the life of a Christian makes far too rigorous a demand on the moral nature.

"But Pascal, above all, is a great spiritual guide in that he shows the right way to Faith. Faith is self-committal, self-surrender; it is an action of the whole man, it is by obedience, by submission to the laws which govern spiritual life that one grows in the knowledge of God." This is a lesson needed more than ever in our day.

Wherein does Pascal come short of full realisation of Christian life?

Undoubtedly there is little of the fruit of joy. Pascal has no conception that since the Incarnation the whole of human life is hallowed. His language about marriage, about the tender relationships of life—a mother's caress, for instance—is horrible. He seems to have committed the usual error of not a few elect

[1] *Pilgrim's Progress.*

souls—the error of imagining the Kingdom of Heaven to be entirely in the future. He seems to know little of what mystical writers call the Unitive Way. We miss in his writings the sweetness and tenderness, the wholesome humour of those who have grasped the meaning of the Love of God.

Vinet's criticism, however, is singularly unjust—that Pascal's defects came from his Catholicism. To those who know the peculiarly sunny effect of the Catholic religion at its best, this seems absurd. He is more true when he says that not St Paul nor St John, nor the Master Himself, have spoken of human life and destiny in more encouraging terms than does Pascal.

That is quite true when we think of unregenerate humanity. But where Pascal seems to come short is in his relations to the Church of God. His realisation of all that Christian life may mean seems to be imperfect, and yet it is probably because in the *Pensées* we have only one or two sides of the great whole, that in these immortal fragments he is chiefly, if not entirely, thinking of the world without God, the world as it organizes itself without God, and indeed in that spectacle there is room for nothing but profound sadness. And Pascal, we must remember, cared little for and knew very little of history.

It has been the vocation of thinkers of a later age to turn men's minds to the thoughts of the immanence of God; to all events of history, the revelations of thought, the movements of society, as but working out the Divine Purpose.

Pascal did not see all that perhaps he might have seen of the Love of God, but he fills a place in the great Temple of which the stones are cut and sharpened by the Master Builder, each unlike any other. He has done, and still does, a great work. He brings the soul of him who will listen to this sternest of teachers, this most unflinching of prophets, face to face with great realities; he rebukes the cowardice, the folly, the criminality of that apathy which can treat such realities as open questions, and which is quite as prevalent in our age as in his own; he

makes us ashamed of our pettiness, our half-heartedness, our inclination to be of those whom Dante has held up to scorn. "Nè fur fedeli a Dio, ma per sè foro."

He has seen "the Lord, high and lifted up," and the vision made him glad with a passionate devotion, with a whole-hearted fervour, which still have force to kindle others as they read.

It is a great book, and it still speaks to us in tones which are strangely modern, in language which we can understand.

There have been saints, greater than Pascal, who, unsparing to themselves, have seen that for others marriage and earthly ties, and the caresses of little children are all Sacraments, all marks of God's love, all ways of approaching God.

But, in spite of this, poor Blaise had all the tenderness and love which characterises the followers of the Lord, and it is wonderful to turn away from the irony of the *Provincial Letters* and the sadness of the *Pensées* to the contemplation of his inner life, and there learn something of the common secret of the saints, the Love of, the devotion to, our Lord.

We read his words "Le Mystère de Jésus," and we feel ourselves in the common fellowship. One by one, all Christ's servants come to this—the knowledge of Christ. "Console-toi, tu ne me chercherais pas, si tu ne m'avais trouvé."

It is this devotion to our Lord which is the secret of the ardent desire for self-mortification. Pascal mortified himself in every way that he could devise. He made himself indifferent to food, and little by little he retrenched every superfluity and cut off every pleasure. More and more he grew in simplicity and fervour and in love for Holy Scripture; he particularly loved to recite the "Little Hours" (Prime, Terce, Sext, and None), because they are chiefly composed of his favourite Psalm CXIX. (Vulgate CXVIII.).

A very few months before his own death, his sister Jacqueline, broken-hearted by the presecutions which

had come upon Port Royal, or perhaps we should rather say, by having been forced by persecution to act somewhat against her conscience, Jacqueline, Sœur Euphémie, had died ; when her much-loved brother, who was devotedly attached to her, was told, he replied, "God give us grace to die as well" ; perhaps he felt their parting was not to be for long.

He too was overwhelmed by the fear, not of persecution, but that persecution might cause defection. As we shall see, there was some attempt at compromise, and Pascal, whose clear eyes saw the evils of any attempt at evasion, fainted away after a meeting of the principal Port Royalists, Antoine Arnauld, his friend Nicole, and others, when it was determined that some compromise should be tried. After this, his health declined.

Pascal died under Mme. Périer's roof almost by accident : he had, two months before he died, become very ill, and was under special medical treatment. While in this state he took into his house a whole family of poor people, among whom small-pox broke out. Afraid lest Mme. Périer might run some risk if she insisted on visiting him, ill as he was, he took up his abode with the Périers, and a few days afterwards was attacked with violent internal pain. He grew so ill that although the doctors were not alarmed, he himself sent for his parish priest and made his confession. But as this frightened some of his friends, he put off his Communion, and as he grew more ill the difficulty of making it grew very great, as it was almost impossible for him to receive fasting, and he did not seem ill enough to receive It as for the Viaticum. It seems extraordinary that he was kept without Communion in spite of his great wish to receive, and his own presentiment of death.

With touching submission he said that as he was deprived of Communion, he would like to have some poor sick person brought into the house and tended with equal care. His devoted sister was willing to do this, but no suitable invalid could just then be found.

One evening he was so ill that he asked for a second medical opinion, and then rather drew back, fearing that he was over careful and self-absorbed. Mme. Périer, however, had this done, and still the doctors declared that there was no danger. However, Mme. Périer sent a message to the parish priest to have everything ready to communicate the poor invalid the next day, and it was well that she did so. In the night he became so ill that his friends thought he would die without that Bread of Life for which he so hungered. And early the next day It was brought, and he was communicated and received Extreme Unction. Twenty-four hours afterwards, the poor, much-tormented, anxious soul passed to the Presence of the Lord whom he had so earnestly desired, whom he had tried so hard to serve.

On the 19th of August 1662, the great soul of Blaise Pascal left this world. He was only thirty-nine.

CHAPTER XIV

THE DAYS OF TRIBULATION (1661-1669)

We must now return to Port Royal. Evil days were fast coming upon the devoted band of priests, nuns, hermits, and pupils, none were to be spared. For these eight years Port Royal was enduring one long agony. The *Petites Écoles* were finally broken up and the pupils dispersed in March, 1660. In 1656, the children who were brought up at Les Granges had been dispersed, but the schools which had been set up at Chenai, the estate of M. de Bernières, lingered on until 1660, when all the children were sent to their home. M. de Bernières was strictly forbidden to receive any more children, and, as M. de Bagnols was dead and could not be punished, his children were taken from their house at Les Troux and sent to Lyons.

This was but the signal. Louis XIV. firmly believed that the Port Royalists were heretics, conspirators closely allied to the Frondeurs, and as intellectual and independent qualities were in his eyes dangerous, he resolved to "make an end." In his mind Protestants and Port Royalists were much alike, and to destroy both, to extirpate both, was part of his scheme of things. "L'État c'est moi," he said, and no kind of resistance, ecclesiastical or political, was to be tolerated, and he was now (1661) Absolute Monarch and needed no Jesuit confessor to urge him on to do what was entirely in accordance with his own wishes.

The subscription to the formulary of 1656 was to be vigorously enacted; not only was it to be signed by priests, but by nuns, teachers in schools, heads of colleges, any kind of person who on one pretext or another could be made to sign.

But even before this demand, the devoted Community was roughly dealt with. On the 23rd of April, 1661, a visit was made to Port Royal de Paris, and a day later to Port Royal des Champs. The Abbess was informed that all the young girls who were being brought up at either place were to be sent home within three days. The alleged cause was that the children were being educated in controversy. Marguerite Périer, the subject of the miracle of the Holy Thorn, wrote afterwards that neither she nor her sister, girls of seventeen and fifteen, knew anything about controversy, nor had they even heard of Jansenists and Molinists.

It is not very hard to realise the heart-breaking grief which invaded the Community, accompanied also by that religious exaltation which is granted to many in the early days of any kind of trouble.

A great persecution was, they believed, about to commence; all of them went to the Mother (Agnès Arnauld) and asked if they should go out closely veiled when they were led out to execution, as was the custom when they appeared before persons of the other sex.

It was no light sorrow which took possession of their young hearts. Port Royal inspired its members with loyalty and love, and those who were so rudely torn away for ever cherished the deepest gratitude and affection for their teachers and their Superiors.

Mère Angélique was at Port Royal des Champs, in a very feeble state of health. It is impossible not to quote a letter of hers to her sister Agnès:—

"I think neither you nor I will have in the future any health, any more than we have a continuing city in this world, and that we must think of our life only as a perpetual offering to God, knowing neither the

day nor the hour when He will call us, knowing not if we shall have then the power to offer it to Him. My dear Mother, I think you are wrong in not venturing to apply to yourself those words of our Father St Bernard which I sent to you, since Jesus Christ who is our righteousness is also our conversion, our reconciliation, our knowledge of God, and everything which we need; and as He has been so merciful to us that we are in our wretchedness and poverty in His Faith and in the Unity of the Church, we can and ought to have in Him all that is wanting to us.

"I think, as you do, that very few people know God, and I think it of myself chiefly; but we shall have our part in the knowledge of Jesus Christ; see Him, my very dear one, and in seeing Him, we shall see in Him His Father. Sometimes I am in great fear, and I try to rest in silence before God. I hope that His Mercy will hold us up. These are the times of the last and hardest sufferings. We must pray God to comfort our hearts to bear them. The bitterness of bodily sufferings afflicts the soul, but the hidden strength of the Lord fortifies it in weakness."

Angélique felt sure that the hour of danger was at hand, and resolved to journey to Paris, and on the 23rd of April she bade her home farewell; never more was she to see the Abbey where so much of her life had been spent, where she had first heard the call of that Voice which she had always from that hour obeyed to the best of her ability. Already the order had been given for M. Singlin's retirement from his office as Superior; he had gone into hiding, and Angélique foresaw that much more would follow.

As she left Port Royal, her brother, M. d'Andilly, came to say farewell, and to his cheerful words of confidence she replied in solemn tones, "Let us remember that humility without stability is cowardice, but courage without humility is presumption." She drove on, and presently met M. Daubray, the magistrate whose unpleasing duty it was to carry out Louis XIV.'s commands. How very little he liked his business the following letter may show; it is

dated the 23rd April, and is addressed to M. d'Andilly :—

"Monsieur, I had intended to visit you at Port Royal, but all my proceedings have been so unfortunate, I thought I ought to spare you this. I had not courage to take you by the hand, and bring you bad news at the same moment. Madame l'Abbesse de Port Royal de Paris (Agnès Arnauld) has enabled me to get rid of a portion of my commission, and for the rest, which is only a formality, to hand it over to Picart, who will, with your permission, intimate to the Prioress and the other officials of the house, my notification, which is handed in by the King's pleasure. He (Picart) will acquit himself with all the respect due to so holy a Community. Forgive the necessity under which I labour."

M. Daubray had been this very day to Port Royal de Paris, accompanied by the *Procureur de Roi* (public prosecutor), and received a list of names of pupils who were, by command of the King, to be sent home. Agnès asked what was to be done with the postulants, but received no definite answer, and naturally when she asked what they had done to deserve such treatment, M. Daubray could give no reason.

Agnès gave to the officials a list of pupils at Port Royal des Champs, and again anxiously inquired through M. Singlin, who was present, what was to be done with the postulants who were to be received the next day ?

Angélique, on hearing from M. Daubray the nature of the King's orders, replied, "Thanks be to God, carry this news to my Sisters, and bid them fear nothing and hope only in God," and, turning to the others in the carriage, "We must, my Sisters, give thanks to God for all things and at all times; let us say the Te Deum."

She arrived at Paris just two hours after Daubray had left, and found the whole party in a state of complete misery.

"What," said Angélique, "are there tears here, have you no faith? You hope in God, and yet you are

afraid! Believe me, only fear God, and all shall be well." And then breaking into passionate prayer, she ejaculated: "O God, have pity on Thy children; O God, let Thy holy will be done." But in spite of her lofty courage, Angélique's heart was torn by the sight of the children and the novices, and the moments of farewell were terrible, as one by one the poor children came to say "Good-bye." This misery dragged on for a whole week, for it was impossible to arrange to send everyone away immediately at such sudden notice, especially in the case of several whose relations were away from Paris. Ten little twelve-year-old girls begged to be clothed as novices, others begged to be made lay Sisters, about whose exclusion nothing had been said. Nor were the relations of the children at all pleased; in fact, it needed a tolerably strong hint from the Minister Colbert, who, it will be remembered, had replaced Fouquet (and, by the way, Port Royal was supposed to be favourable to the unfortunate financier), to induce the Duc de Luines to withdraw his three daughters.

Angélique had, on her arrival, decided to clothe several postulants at once; the eldest of the Demoiselles de Luines pleaded hard to be allowed to join them, but Mère Angélique told her it was impossible to receive her without the Duc de Luines' consent. The Duc consulted his mother, the well-known Duchesse de Chevreuse, and what he heard made him fully aware of the uselessness of trying to keep the novices, and Mlle. de Luines and her sisters were taken away—the eldest, usually known as Madame de Luines, and two younger ones. The two eldest never wavered in their devotion to the Religious Life, and became nuns.[1]

Mlle. de Bagnols and Mlle. de Montglat, and the Périer sisters also, lived in the same spirit of unwavering fidelity to Port Royal.

The parting with the eldest Mlle. de Luines, and with Mlle. de Bagnols, was specially heartrending; they had been at Port Royal since early days; the mother of

[1] Bossuet carried on a correspondence with the younger, who was known as Madame d'Albret.

one and the father of the other were dead. Mme. de Chevreuse, who, after a stormy life, was living in great devotion, came to take them away, and Angélique, as she gave her children her last embrace, replied to the grandmother, who said something about her courage, "Madame, when there is no God I will lose courage, but so long as God is God I will hope in Him," and then turning to Mlle. de Luines, who could not be comforted, "Go, my child, hope in God, trust in His infinite love with all your heart, and do not let yourself be cast down. We shall meet in another place, where men will have no power to separate us."

And these sad scenes went on; as a friend wrote to Antoine Arnauld: "The Guardian Angels of these lambs are very busy gathering up their tears and bearing them into the Presence of God."

Processions were made and Litanies were sung; Angélique fell to the ground during one of these, and was carried to her bed, to finish her long agony.

Mère Agnès in her capacity as Abbess made a very dignified and respectful remonstrance to the King. She points out to him that never had the Community received any ecclesiastical censure whatever, and reminded him of the signal marks of God's favour so lately bestowed.

According to the *Histoire des Persécutions*, the King said some kind things about the letter, but did nothing to relieve the misery.

Another trial, which was perhaps as great as any which could have befallen Mère Angélique, now came on her.

On the 5th of May M. Singlin was compelled to go into hiding, and after saying Mass he left his flock, who received a letter from the King ordering the *Grands Vicaires* to choose as a Superior one out of seven names. The King wrote a letter to the Clergy in which he mentions his "desire to see the true doctrine of the Church flourish in the Convent," and orders M. Singlin to retire into Brittany. On Monday, May 9th, the devoted nuns received a letter from their

beloved Superior breathing calmness and charity. "In prayer, silence, and hope, God being all our strength, in them we must enclose our defence and our justification."

On the 13th May, for the third time, M. Daubray and the public prosecutor arrived at Port Royal, and presented the letters, at the same time reprimanding the Abbess on the part of His Majesty for having "clothed" the novices. They also intended to arrest M. Singlin, but as he was not at Port Royal the command could not be executed.

M. Bail was chosen by the *Grands Vicaires* to succeed M. Singlin. The Abbess declined to receive M. Bail as Superior, but she consented to receive him as sent by the *Grands Vicaires.*

Eight postulants and seven novices left Port Royal; the novices declined to take off their habits. The Abbess had left it to them to decide, and they one and all dared to brave the anger of the King. One of the postulants was allowed to stay behind; she proposed to become a lay Sister, and as lay Sisters were not mentioned, she escaped banishment.

Angélique, from her bed of sickness, wrote to M. de Sévigné, uncle of Madame de Sévigné, who had for a year been living a life of penitential devotion, and who was a lover of Port Royal:—

"So at last our Merciful God has deprived us of all, fathers, sisters, and children. May His holy name be blessed. Sorrow is here, but peace and entire submission to the Divine Will are here also, and we are persuaded that this visitation is a great token of God's mercy to us, and that it was absolutely needful in order that we might be purified and ready to use the grace we have received in such abundance."

But Angélique was brave and dignified. With her dying hand and with failing strength she wrote a remonstrance to Anne of Austria, in which she points out how far removed from a controversial atmosphere was that habitually breathed by the nuns of Port

Royal. It is quite true that a few leading spirits, such as the second Angélique, M. d'Andilly's daughter, knew the points of dispute and had probably read Arnauld's *Fréquente Communion*, but the great majority lived in perfect ignorance and entire simplicity, and it is probable that Angélique de St Jean and the others talked very little.

M. Bail again arrived at Port Royal and proceeded to insist on replacing the ordinary confessors of Port Royal by priests of his own choosing. The names of the confessors were M. de Rebours, who died very soon afterwards, M. Akakia du Mont, and M. d'Alençon. Mère Angélique was so ill that it seemed doubtful whether she would live more than a few days, and on the 11th June she received Viaticum. M. Singlin and her nephew De Saci wrote to her frequently, and at first De Saci came to see his aunt, but it was felt to be unsafe for him to do so, and Angélique adjured her sisters not to let him run any risks. The Bastille or the Bois de Vincennes seemed a likely fate for both these priests.

Agnès sympathised much with Angélique in the withdrawal of M. Singlin. Angélique's words are very remarkable: "God wills it, that is enough. For myself, I feel M. Singlin as much with me in his affection as if I saw him with my eyes. I greatly valued and do value his direction, but I have never put a man in the place of God."

In the meantime M. Bail was engaged in treating the Community as one wholly devoid of elementary Christian knowledge. On the 5th June the formulary was brought to the Port Royalists; an order—"mandement"—had been drawn up, explained by the *Grands Vicaires* in terms which it was hoped the Port Royalists might conscientiously accept. With infinite pain it was signed by both Communities, but Jacqueline Pascal's heart was broken, and she died two months afterwards. She wrote a long letter to the younger Angélique, in which she explained her difficulties. She says:—

"What is easier than to reply, 'I know the respect due to the Bishops, but I cannot in conscience sign an affirmation that something is in a book which I have not seen'; and then having said this, simply wait the issue of events? Of what is it that we are afraid? exile for priests, dispersion for nuns, seizing of our temporal goods, prison or death, if you wish. But that surely is our glory, our joy. But you say 'they will cut us off from the Church'; but no one can be cut off in spite of himself; the Spirit of Jesus Christ is the bond between His members and Himself; we may be deprived of exterior marks, never of the effect which follows this union."

Jacqueline Pascal was a child of Savonarola. Antoine Arnauld induced her to sign, but the sacrifice was quite useless.

Angélique, the great Angélique, lay dying, suffering much from the fear which is sometimes allowed to possess the most holy souls, as they realise more and more the awful holiness of God, the awful hatefulness of sin. Her one request was that all who loved her would pray that God would forgive her. In this spirit she received the afflictions which were coming so thick and fast upon Port Royal; she would allow no word of censure against those who carried out the orders of the King. The very last time that she saw the Community together, she entreated their prayers for her that God would give her patience, and bring low her pride.

The Visitation of the Convent began on the 12th July, and was carried on by the new Superior, M. Bail, and by M. de Contes, Dean of Notre Dame; and after Mass M. de Contes said a few words which were quite gentle and moderate. M. Bail followed him in a discourse which must have astonished the unfortunate Sisters. He spoke of the various visitations of God mentioned in Holy Scripture; then of the necessity of visiting Religious houses; and then explained the supposed doctrine of Jansenius, and exhorted them to examine themselves as to this "damnable doctrine," so much akin to that of Calvin.

It is difficult to realise the effect on the unfortunate nuns, who knew that nothing was further removed from their ordinary life and conversation than controversies on grace or election; to hear themselves roundly accused of something very like Calvinism must have had the effect of a thunderbolt. Then Bail did not stop there. There were references to sin, to that which was utterly foreign to any sort of religious practice, to all sorts of irregularities, which must have seemed outrageous insults to nuns who had been instructed by men such as De Saci and Singlin, and who very probably had not so much as ever heard an allusion to sin in the gross sense of the word.

Bail was brutal, destitute of spiritual insight, and the outraged, insulted, terrified Community burst into general weeping at the conclusion of his harangue. In vain M. de Contes tried to sooth them.

The priests mounted to Mère Angélique's room, who received them with much of her old vigour. "The day of the Lord would come," she said, "and all things would be made manifest."

M. Bail interrogated fifteen Sisters. He began with the accusation that at Port Royal Communion was infrequent; as a matter of fact, the Sisters made their Communion on Sundays, holy days, Thursdays, and on other special days. On the Prioress (Agnès de Ligni) being asked if anyone had ever been cut off from Communion for three months, she exclaimed: "Jesus Maria, we should have thought ourselves excommunicated." And then at the question, "Did Christ die for all men?"—"Yes," replied the nuns; as one by one they were asked, "Had they ever read controversial books?"—"No."

Poor old Sisters tottered in; among them one who had been there before Mère Angélique, and had been converted in those happy days, now so far distant, of the first generation of Port Royal. Nothing but what was good could be extracted from them; they knew nothing of controversy, they went to confession and Communion, they tried to be obedient and loving,

they were perfectly happy, they could only accuse themselves, no one else, of any fault.

Another Sister had heard Port Royal attacked before she joined the Community; once she was in that Convent, she found how utterly false the calumnies were.

Angélique de Saint Jean was received by the priests as one who at last could really give them some information. They questioned her as to the number of Arnaulds "in religion," and M. de Contes said: "Il faut avouer que Dieu a rendu votre famille une famille de bénédiction;" to which Angélique replied: "Nous en sommes bien obligées à sa misericorde, Monsieur, mais cette bénédiction de Dieu ne nous met pas à couvert de la malédiction des hommes."

Angélique was quite another order of being from those who had preceded her. She dwelt on the terror of the novices; "who indeed would not be frightened? They are compared to Sodom and Gomorrah, to magicians, to the 'possessed' at Auxonne; isn't that enough to overwhelm them? Indeed we don't know what it means." Poor M. Bail tried lamely to justify himself, and plunged still further into inextricable difficulties by alluding to St Paul's severity to the Corinthian sinner; to which Angélique warmly replied, that the evils which St Paul rebuked did not exist at Port Royal.

She justified her Community with great ability, refuted the charge of Calvinism, and satisfied the priests as to her orthodoxy on the subject of grace and on the instruction she gave to the novices, of whom she was Mistress. The priests must have been really puzzled.

After Angélique had retired, they questioned the next Sisters as to what objects of piety were permitted, as to how the nuns made their confessions, as to their consultations with their Mother.

More than one of M. d'Andilly's daughters were interrogated, but of them, as of all the rest, could only be said: "Elle croit tout ce que la Sainte Eglise croit."

Another of the nuns was Racine's aunt; she was a good deal frightened by being questioned as to whether one could resist efficacious grace; she hardly knew what to say. Her little piece of autobiography is very interesting. She nursed the sick; she had been received without any dowry; she was sometimes afraid of hard work, but the thought of ministering to our Lord Himself in the persons of the sick helped her.

One of a numerous band of sisters named Robert, on saying she had sometimes been to M. Antoine Arnauld for confession, was eagerly asked as to what he said;—had he never talked of matters of controversy? "No," replied the Sister, "he exhorted her to ask God's help always, in every need, and said that the greatest fault of all was—discouragement."

One of the most touching recitals was that of Sœur Eugénie, whom we remember as Mme. de Saint Ange; she of course was known by name to the priests; she told them how her great affliction (widowhood) had made her wish to become a nun and how she had entered Port Royal, and of the peace which had been granted her.

It is, of course, impossible to give many details of these conferences. The questions were nearly always: "Did Christ die for all men?" "Could grace be resisted?" "How often did the nun who was then being questioned go to confession and Communion?" and then a variety of other details.

One of the last of the Sisters of Port Royal de Paris to be questioned had been in attendance on the Queen of Poland, Mère Angélique's beloved Marie de Gonzague. She had shown Sœur Marguerite, the nun in question, the various writings for and against Port Royal, and at the Queen's advice had entered Port Royal. She gave M. Bail and M. de Contes a most vivid account of the perils of her journey back to France from Poland, in the travelling carriage of a lady returning to France, and of the "perils from robbers" which she had undergone. The journey lasted six weeks.

Christine Briquet, of whom we shall see more, was compelled to undergo a complete catechism on such

elementary subjects as the Sacraments, and the articles of the Faith, and to repeat an act of contrition. M. Bail made a good many of the younger sisters answer questions on the Faith as taught in the ordinary Catechism.

Then came the visit to Port Royal des Champs, of which the Mère du Fargis,[1] was Mère Prieure; she was much surprised and overwhelmed to hear that it was reported by various people that the children who had been taken away from Port Royal, had represented themselves as taught the various heresies attributed to Port Royal; of course this was a manifest absurdity.

It is hardly necessary to go through the examinations of each Sister; they were much the same as at Port Royal de Paris; but there is a pathetic interest attached to that of Sœur Euphémie (Jacqueline Pascal). She answered with grave dignity, and with no attempt at repartee. When asked why so many souls were lost, she replied: "I own that the thought of the lost saddens me very often, especially when I see a crucifix, and I say to our Lord, 'O my God, after all Thou hast done for us, how can it be that so many are lost?' But when these thoughts come into my mind, I turn away from them, because I do not think I ought to try to penetrate into the hidden things of God. And so I content myself with praying for sinners." M. Bail seems to have been impressed by Jacqueline Pascal; he gave her many blessings.

It is very touching to read the lay Sisters' examinations; they are so naïve, so absolutely ignorant of what all this "vacarme" is about, so fully persuaded that all is peace and union, and that there is just one rather imperfect person in the Community, and that one the Sister who is speaking.

Certainly as we read these touching accounts, we feel how truly miserable a thing is religious controversy,

[1] Henriette d'Angennes du Fargis, daughter of the Marquis du Fargis, and known in Religion as La Mère Marie de Sainte Magdeleine, had been brought up from her earliest childhood at Port Royal, and was a true child of Mère Angélique.

and how equally to blame were those who manufactured the Formulary, and those who were responsible for the resistance to it. But a certain number of Sisters, Angélique de Saint Jean, Sœur Euphémie, Christine Briquet, and others, had read the *Provincial Letters*, and knew that St Cyran as well as Jansenius was condemned. The propositions they all abhorred, the avowal that they were held by the friend of him whom they revered as a second founder was impossible.

In the meanwhile, the Lieutenant Civil, the King's prosecutor, visited Port Royal de Paris, and carefully examined the various sets of apartments occupied by various ladies; several doors were walled up; the idea was prevalent that constant meetings were held and plots hatched at Port Royal. Mère Angélique lay dying and suffering extreme desolation and fear. The fear of death had taken hold on her. But one day her dear friend and confessor, M. Singlin, contrived to come and see her, and he so comforted her, that as he was going away, she said: "My father, I shall not see you again, but I promise you I will no longer be afraid of God."

Mère Angélique grew daily more like Him to Whom she had given herself. She refused to say anything against those who were persecuting Port Royal; they were but instruments in God's hands. "You must not say that, my children," she said one day, when something had been mentioned about those who were blocking up the doors. "We must pray God alike for them and for ourselves, that He will be merciful to us, and that His holy will may be done."

As the days went on and she grew daily weaker, she seemed to live in continual prayer. One day she was murmuring: "Our salvation in the time of trouble." Angélique de St Jean said in one of those moments of uncontrollable anguish: "Oh, Mother, this time of trouble has really come upon us." "It is good for us, my child," replied Angélique. This was on the 4th of August. On the 5th she received Holy Viaticum, and fell into a sort of stupor, from which she was roused to

send a message to Port Royal des Champs, and on the 6th of August (the Feast of the Transfiguration) she passed from her long agony to the Mount of God. She was buried at Port Royal de Paris, but her heart lies at Port Royal des Champs.

Angélique was of the number of great religious women. Noble, strong, self-sacrificing, single-hearted, absolutely loyal to her Lord, she had grown continually in character; she was a real saint. She, as M. St Beuve says, would have repressed the extraordinary passion for writing about themselves which possessed those of the second generation of Port Royal. She knew how soon firmness and constancy can be changed into self-will and obstinacy. Somehow we cannot help feeling that if she had been younger and had lived some years longer, the fortunes of her Community might have been different. One cannot tell; she and St Cyran made Port Royal and formed the noble band of men and women who were dragged, almost unknown to themselves, into the storms which finally wrecked them, so far as this world is concerned.

We have seen that the inspection of Port Royal was concluded in September 1661, and Mère Agnès wrote to her nephew, Henri, Bishop of Angers :—

"Our visitation is over, and we have been left in the same state as we were before. Those who directed it could make no remark on our faith, which they recognized as being entirely orthodox. But we have reason to remind ourselves of St Paul's words—if our conscience accuse us not in any matter, we are not justified thereby in the sight of men—because we are again treated as criminals, although our crime has not yet been discovered; and since the time that M. Bail has searched for it with an unequalled keenness, he was obliged to say to us in conclusion that he had found nothing for which he did not feel compelled to give God thanks. He did not fail to add that he would have been sadly afflicted if he had discovered any of the things which he suspected, for in that case he would have been compelled to try extreme measures, expulsion, excommunication, as of enemies of the Church, and that it

would have been a great evil for someone to have said: "St Augustine is on my side;" others would have quoted St Paul, and there would have been no cure. Such are the pleasing sayings of this excellent person, who is burning with zeal against imaginary enemies, and who is incapable of ridding himself of the suspicions he has that those who were our spiritual guides are infected with this new heresy."

Mère Agnès was very weary, and no trial could have cut so deep as this accusation of heresy. And these were indeed days of trouble and rebuke. M. d'Andilly fell ill; the Mère Marie des Anges and Pascal's sister were both expected to die, worn out by the anxieties and scruples about the first "Mandement," and indeed, as we know, Sœur Euphémie passed away in October.

M. Bail and M. le Contes drew up a report of their inspection, which we need not give in its entirety. Amongst other things they reported that they found the house rightly ordered, the rules strictly kept, the Sacraments frequented, and simplicity and devotion throughout. No wonder after this that Agnès thought she might entreat permission to admit novices.

The *Grands Vicaires* of Paris, finding the first "Mandement" insufficient, now put out a second, on the 31st of October 1661. Naturally, no enemy of Port Royal was satisfied. No one really supposed that any Port Royalist would hesitate for one moment to condemn the famous five propositions, but the new "Mandement" exacted a simple signature without any modification. It was drawn up at the request of the Papal Nuncio, and no distinction was to be made between "fait" and "droit."

Agnès Arnauld and the Community discussed the matter of the signature, and agreed to sign with an explanation. This decision was not arrived at without considerable hesitation and fervent prayer. M. le Contes, who had arrived at having a great regard for Port Royal, implored Mère Agnès and the rest to sign:

"Throw the responsibility on me," he said, "as I throw it on the Pope who had obliged me to do so."

After all, this was a simple way out of it—only, an easy way of cutting the knot was not the way of Port Royal. If the *Augustinus* contained heretical matters, what was to be said of St Cyran, the friend of Jansenius? what were they all?

And so they signed, with this explanation, on 28th November 1661. Beyond this they dared not go. As Sainte Beuve says: "Plutôt souffrir mille morts que de mentir une seule fois."

The explanation inscribed in the middle of the documents which contained all their signatures was to this effect:—

"We—the Abbess, Prioress, and nuns of Port Royal— . . . in consideration of the ignorance in which we are concerning those things which are beyond our province as both regards our sex and our religious profession, we feel that all we can do is to testify to the purity of our faith and to declare willingly by our signatures that . . . we willingly agree to all that His Holiness (Pope Alexander VII.) and Pope Innocent have declared, and we reject every error which they have rejected."

It cost the Port Royalists not a little to sign this explanation; and after it was signed there were many searchings of hearts and many tears. However, the signatures were taken to the Dean, M. le Contes, who said *he* was satisfied, but the Court would not be. "Tell them to sign simply without any explanation." This demand was not complied with, and the explanation was sent with the signatures.

The next event was the election of a new Abbess for Port Royal de Paris, Agnès's term of office being over; Agnès Madeleine de St Ange de Ligny was elected. She was the niece of the Chancellor Séguier, and had had, as a young girl, some difficulty about being allowed to remain at Port Royal. She had been there since 1630, and was a true child of Mère Angélique.

Many efforts were now made by various people to induce the nuns to sign, and the year 1662 opened on this strife of tongues. Just then came the wonderful cure of Catherine Suzanne Champagne, the daughter of the painter Philip Champagne, who recovered from lameness after a novena of prayer. M. Champagne painted a picture commemorating the cure, which as Sainte Beuve says, is the only luxury of art that the Port Royalists ever permitted themselves. The friends of Port Royal hoped much from this cure, but it made very little impression. A final addition was made to the explanation of the signatures, to the effect that as the aforesaid Popes had decided that these errors are found in the five propositions "in the sense that they are in Jansenius's teaching, we submit truly to this decision, and we reject with heart and speech the said propositions and the meaning they convey in Jansenius."

This was sent to Port Royal, and had been drawn up by Père Annat, the Jesuit. In the meanwhile the Princesse de Guémenée had been doing her best to get at the King; but finding it vain, she exclaimed to M. le Tellier: "After all, Sir, the King does everything he wishes to do—he creates Princes of the Blood, he makes Archbishops and Bishops; he will also create Martyrs." The Princesse also represented to Anne of Austria that to be persecuted and culumniated is characteristic of saints; but the Queen changed the conversation.

Another misfortune had befallen Port Royal. The Cardinal de Retz resigned the Archbishopric of Paris, and M. de Marca, Archbishop of Toulouse, was nominated to the See in his place. Louis XIV. expected the new Archbishop to carry out the royal wishes respecting Port Royal; but just after the new prelate had received the Bulls confirming his election, he died. It is a pity that the Port Royalists displayed so lively a satisfaction and were quite so sure that his death was a judgment of God upon the oppressors. We feel that we have travelled a long way from St

Cyran, when we remember how he received the news of Richelieu's death.

A short respite now ensued. Hardouin de Beaumont de Péréfixe, a former tutor of the King, and Bishop of Rhodez, was nominated as successor to De Marca; but the relations between the Papal Court and Louis XIV. were so strained that de Péréfixe did not receive the Bulls for nearly two years. The Pope at that time, Alexander VII., had always been opposed to France, and had been on bad terms with Mazarin. Louis XIV., on assuming sole power, sent an Ambassador Extraordinary, the Duc de Créqui, to the Papal Court; but violent quarrels broke out, chiefly because the Pope's relations and friends violated the laws which in civilised nations had always protected the persons of ambassadors. There were constant quarrels between the French soldiers and the Pope's adherents, and these actually allowed the ambassador to be fired on by the Pope's Guard, which was recruited from Corsica.

Louis XIV. was not a king whom it was possible to treat in this way. The Papal Nuncio had to leave France; and the Pope had in time to make apologies and to punish the unfortunate Corsican Guard who had been the offenders and were made the scapegoats, and to make various humiliating concessions.

As Henri Martin says: "It was centuries since the Court of Rome had been so deeply humiliated by a Catholic Sovereign. The days of Boniface VIII. seemed to be renewed, although in a rather less brutal form."[1]

France up to that time had never been in reality ultramontane, and while these quarrels were at their height, the Paris *Parlement* took occasion to fulminate against a thesis set forth at the Sorbonne in favour of papal infallibility, and the Sorbonne hastened to condemn any teaching which should attribute to the Pope any temporal authority over kings, and any right to supersede ancient canons, any supremacy over a general council, any infallibility.

[1] *Histoire de France*, vol. xiii., p. 296.

One would have thought that the Port Royalists must indeed escape, if Louis XIV. had had any regard for logic. However, a short breathing time was given to Port Royal; for the Jesuits had their own business to attend to, since they were naturally on the papal side. But that it was only a respite was clearly understood by the devoted Community, and they began to prepare themselves for the coming persecution. Agnès drew up some instructions and rules for the time, which were fully approved by Antoine Arnauld.

Racine, in his history of Port Royal, which only extends up to the peace of the Church, 1669, writes that the nuns of Port Royal had at the beginning no knowledge of controversy. Their spiritual advisers never talked to them about such things, and only taught them what was necessary for their souls' salvation. But, on the other hand, they had been thoroughly taught the duties of their profession, and the precepts of the Gospel.

Their minds were steeped in the great principles laid down by St Paul and St Augustine;—for instance, that it is never right to sin wilfully, whatever occasions may arise; that it is better to bear the greatest sufferings; that it is better to die than to utter a trifling falsehood; that as God and Truth are one, the truth cannot be wounded apart from God; that it is impossible to make a statement about a fact of which one knows nothing; and that to say one believes what one does not believe is a horrible crime in the sight of God and man.

And, above all, the nuns had been inspired with an extreme horror of mental reservations, and the clever inventions of modern casuistry, the object of these being to palliate falsehood and to elude truth. And this being so, we can easily conceive the repugnance which these nuns felt about signing the Formulary. They had been obliged to learn something of the controversy which had produced so great an excitement in the Church. . . . They had learned that two Popes, at the request of the Jesuits and of several Bishops, had

condemned five abominable propositions which, they said, had been taken from Jansenius.

Everyone agreed that these propositions were heretical, but the greater number of Theologians, distinguished alike for piety and learning, among whom were the nuns' own directors, held that these propositions were not in the *Augustinus* of Jansenius.

So there was some room for doubt as to these propositions being in the book at all—the book, moreover, of a Bishop who had died in odour of sanctity, and who, in that very book, seemed almost excessive in his submission to the Holy See. Thus, whether the nuns were wrong or not, could they sign the Formulary with a clear conscience? Would it not have been to protest the exact opposite of what they believed?

And if they were told that they ought to trust to the decisions of two Popes, they had learned that neither Pope nor Council is infallible as to facts which do not belong to revelation.

Racine goes on to say that the Jesuits' thesis of the infallibility of the Pope is a new and dangerous heresy, and not only a heresy, but a manifest and glaring impiety; for it makes a created being equal to God, and it would give to the word of a man that devotion which can only be given to the Eternal Word.

This is clear enough: the Port Royalists were not Protestants. They were loyal Catholics; but the Ultramontanism of the Jesuits was quite new to them.

CHAPTER XV

PERSECUTION—MÈRE ANGÉLIQUE DE ST JEAN (1663-1669)

A VIGOROUS but quite fruitless effort was made just at this time to bring about peace. One of the best of Port Royal's friends, the Bishop of Comminges, received a communication from the Professor of Theology at Toulouse, which led to a meeting between the two in September. They proposed that the two opposing parties should explain their views, and should try to bring them into accordance with the teaching of the Church, that they should recognise the fact that there were two schools of thought in the Church, and persuade the Pope to do so, and beg his blessing on both.

The King consented that M. Arnauld, M. Singlin, and others should come to Paris, but Antoine Arnauld was intractable. Nothing would induce him to confer personally with a Jesuit; he would do nothing but write, and one can only feel the bitterest disappointment at the obstinacy, the want of ability to see anybody's point but his own, which characterised Antoine Arnauld and which wrecked an attempt which might possibly have succeeded, and which would have saved, if it had done nothing else, untold suffering, mental and physical, to innocent women.

The father of the illustrious M. de Tillemont, who was deeply attached to Port Royal, wrote to Arnauld: "You will stand condemned before God and man, if you will not believe a prelate so clear-headed, so virtuous, so far above all suspicion as is M. de Comminges," and much more. No doubt Arnauld followed his conscience; but his letters to M. de Comminges are

almost irritating in their proud humility and their calm assurance of being in the right.

In March 1663, he writes to M. Singlin that he has retired into hiding, and that he wishes to be responsible only for himself. He thought too much of himself, too little of the whole Household of Faith. In vain did his brother Henri, Bishop of Angers, write and point out what was meant by submission, and the great importance of peace. Arnauld wrote endless letters and analyses of the disputed points.

Possibly no understanding could have been arrived at; but how sad that *non possumus* was Arnauld's ultimatum. M. d'Andilly was made quite ill, and his son, M. de Pomponne, declared that the affair would kill his father. M. d'Andilly wrote to his recalcitrant brother, his junior by so many years, that whenever the proposed reconciliation seemed at all likely to come about, he (Arnauld) was sad, but when it was evidently in a bad way he grew cheerful. We cannot but agree with M. Sainte Beuve as to the impatience and weariness which Arnauld's dogged obstinacy caused all plain men. He himself, to do him justice, suffered considerably; but we cannot acquit him.

M. de Comminges realised that without Arnauld the reconciliation was *un coup manqué*. All that could be done was to send a letter to Rome fully explaining the opinions of the leading Port Royalists on the condemned proposition. This simply led to a papal letter addressed to all the French Bishops condemning Jansenius, and that, of course, led to a fulmination on Arnauld's part, in which he, as Sainte Beuve says, appears "à cheval sur la conscience." The whole attempt failed, and the good Bishop had sense enough to abstain from writing.

It was just about this time that Pascal died, and in the midst of her own fears Agnès writes to Mme. Périer: "You are left alone, my dear sister, to gather up all that has been bequeathed by a brother and sister who were rich in the riches given by God."

Agnès writes to her brother the Bishop of Angers:—

"It seems to me that if I had died two years ago, I should have lost a great deal; all that has happened has made me realise how valueless the Religious Life is, if it is without trials; we needed the guidance God has given us; it is needful to refine gold by fire, so that it may be purified from all alloy." She seems in her deeply spiritual and charitable mind to find comfort in M. Bail, who on St Andrew's day had preached a sermon on being crucified with Christ.

When the efforts of M. de Comminges entirely failed, she writes: "This so much talked of compromise has only made things more difficult than they were before."

In 1664 the new Archbishop at last received the Bulls, and Port Royal decided to send him a courteous message of congratulation. They sent as their messenger our old friend Claude Lancelot, who gives us a full account of his embassy. He began with the usual polite congratulations, and went on to say that the Community much hoped for the new Archbishop's protection. He explains that he (Lancelot) did not live at Port Royal, but that he was much attached to the Community. The Archbishop, on his side, explained that the King was persuaded that a new heresy had arisen and he was fully resolved to crush it—"Represent to them," went on the Archbishop, "that they really ought to find some way to satisfy the King; two Popes have pronounced, Bishops have received their judgment, the Faculty of Theology has admitted it; doctors, religious, have signed; there is no sense in a single convent of nuns laying down the law to the others and appearing more exact, more intelligent than Popes, Doctors, Bishops, Priests,"—etc., etc.

Lancelot tried to put in a word here and there, and seems to have arrived at the perception, not peculiar to himself, that it is not easy to discuss matters with great people, who can say anything they please, whereas their opponents have little or no freedom of speech. However, when the Archbishop, a person of no great intelligence or learning, paused, Lancelot answered gently that there could be no suspicion of heresy, it was

only a question of facts; could not the King be persuaded that no new heresy had arisen in France, and was it not a pardonable fault in "the poor Port Royalists to have extremely tender consciences?" to which M. de Péréfixe replied (and no doubt there is something to be said for *his* point of view) that tenderness of conscience should in this case be dubbed stubbornness. The conversation lasted a long time. Lancelot had plenty to say, but the Archbishop held to his point;—the unfortunate book had been pronounced to contain the five heresies. The conversation ended by the Archbishop saying: "Tell them I value their goodness, I would shed my blood to get them out of this terrible strait."

Lancelot retired and, as it were, threw down the gage of battle *à outrance* to the Archbishop's private chaplain: "You have only to say to the Archbishop that as for signing—cela et la mort—c'est la même chose."

And now we enter on this sad chapter. The Archbishop was not fitted by ability, or learning, or character, to deal with this most difficult problem; he was derided by a number of exceedingly clever people, who spared him nothing. He was very kind, he longed to be a father in God, and he was assailed on all sides by such people as Mme. de Longueville and M. de Sainte Marthe. It was a sad and perplexing business.[1]

M. de Sainte Marthe's letter is heartrending; he pleads that tolerance is shown to those who dispense men from obedience to God, and he describes the Jesuits' way of making things easy as set forth by the *Provincial Letters*, and pleads for some equal justice. Some of his phrases have a very modern ring about them, and might seem to be the utterances of an English priest asking for a little tolerance for some of his brethren who had offended by the use of some piece of unwonted ceremonial, or the teaching of some forgotten doctrine.

He goes on to say that if the Archbishop does

[1] For a particularly ridiculous anecdote of Archbisop Péréfixe, see Sainte Beuve, *Port Royal*, vol. iv., p. 180.

subdue the poor nuns—"the wounds you inflict on yourself will be no less mortal than is the wound which they receive from your hand. Judge them, Monseigneur, but with a righteous judgment which may prepare them for the judgment of the Sovereign Judge. Come, if it please you to correct their faults, strengthen their weakness, mortify them to that extent which you deem suitable for their welfare; treat their faults with that degree of severity which seems needful. They will be very thankful to you; they will always think that your goodness exceeds all severity of judgment, provided that you are willing to recognise them as your daughters, and that you will permit them not to take part in controversies which are unsuitable to their condition and are only interruptions to that silence in which they would work out their salvation."

The Archbishop began by publishing a mandate in which he laid down a distinction between Divine Faith and what he called human faith, and said that it was through human faith that the faithful were to believe "le fait." Dogmas of the Faith were to be believed by Divine Faith. These were not happy terms, and Nicole, Antoine Arnauld's faithful friend and companion, set to work at once to demolish this new system of "foi humaine." He did this cleverly; but we feel that Sainte Beuve's criticism is perfectly just, that Nicole forgot he was a member of a Church which is a hierarchy. The Archbishop's remark cited by Sainte Beuve is not unjust—"S'ils [the Port Royalists] pouvaient être seulement six mois sans écrire!"

On the 9th of June, the Archbishop arrived at Port Royal at half-past ten in the morning, and after a discourse on the duty of obedience, and on the fact that Jansenius's book had been condemned by the Pope, he went on to say that their refusal to sign the Formulary was due to the opinions of certain people whose *dicta* ought never to be set in opposition to those of the Church and of their Superiors. He wished to help them, and would regard their interview with him as wholly confidential.

The next day, after the Mass of the Holy Ghost, he began the private examinations, and at once the poor prelate lost his temper. After some "heckling" he burst out to the first Sister: "You are more enlightened —wiser people, than the Pope, than your Archbishop, than all Religious Orders, etc., etc." Finally, when Marguerite de St Gertrude gasped out her final refusal, he cried out: "Go away, go out of this place; there's no reason in you," and she went away; but after the next interview, she returned to ask the Episcopal blessing and to beg pardon for having displeased the Archbishop. He was quite kind, and begged her to pray for the light of the Holy Spirit, and also begged her to forgive him for anything he had said to vex her.

Angélique de St Jean—M. d'Andilly's daughter—was quite capable of sustaining her part. She had her aunt's, the first Angélique's, strength of mind, and she was far more inclined for controversy. She had been formed to a considerable extent by her uncle, Antoine Arnauld, who held her in great respect; she was also extremely shrewd.

The Archbishop and Angélique argued at great length, and Angélique got much the best of the discussion. Her reply to a remark of his, that to sign the Formulary was an opportunity for the Community to extricate themselves from their unpleasant position, was: "I think, Monseigneur, that it is not so easy to extricate ourselves from the persecution to which we have been exposed for the last twenty years. The signature is not the beginning of it, and I think it will certainly not be the end. I confess to you that simply from our own experience, it will be difficult for us to believe that when we are asked for a simple token of obedience, there is not also a hidden cause for the way in which we are now treated." She goes on to describe the vicissitudes that had befallen Port Royal since the arrest of St Cyran, to which the Archbishop hastily interposed an account of what Richelieu, in whose service he (the Archbishop) then was, had said to him: "He called me that day and said, 'Beaumont, I have

done something to-day which will cause a great outcry against me; I have had l'Abbé de St Cyran arrested by order of the King.'" The Cardinal then proceeded to say that St Cyran had great gifts, but he also had opinions of his own, which would probably cause disturbances in the Church, and that anything which caused disturbances in the Church would also cause disturbance in the State. Poor Angélique was much vexed with herself for having said nothing in reply to all that was said about M. de St Cyran; the conversation terminated with a great show of politeness and civility on the side of the Archbishop, and a burst of sorrow from Angélique.

The next to appear was Christine Briquet, a most intelligent and clever little person. The Archbishop wasted little time on preliminaries with her, but opened fire on the fatal propositions, and the whole controversy, and enquired what were Christine's sentiments.

She replied in terms of meekness and humility which irritated the Archbishop, perhaps not unnaturally.

He questioned her as to who had inspired her with the resolution not to sign, and when he could get nothing out of her but that when she had prayed no other resolution but that of refusing to sign would present itself, either to her or to any other Sister in like case, he said: "What, after having prayed in that way, you made up your minds by yourselves not to sign? For it must be one of two things, either you have taken counsel together, or you have asked it from some clever person; if you took the opinion of a learned and capable man, you would perhaps not have acted so badly; but if you made up your minds by yourselves not to do something which your Superiors order you to do, allow me to tell you that you are very presumptuous, to think yourselves more capable of judging a matter which you yourselves confess you do not comprehend" —and this criticism is not really very unjust.

Christine replied that she had asked advice about

the signature. And the Archbishop replied to her with much benevolence and proceeded to set forth at length the whole affair from his point of view. He reminded her as he had done others, that Jansenius submitted his book to the Papal judgment. The Pope had caused the book to be examined; it was condemned, and the whole Church had accepted this condemnation excepting a handful of people. Christine quoted various Bishops and the redoubtable Antoine Arnauld, and reminded the Archbishop of the miracle of the Holy Thorn, and of the more recent mark of Divine favour in the person of the daughter of M. Champagne; she also told him of a Sister who saw visions, and the Archbishop begged her to use commonsense; however, he listened to her account of a dream, which was not complimentary to the Jesuits, and then begged her to listen to him. He was not a Jesuit, nor in any way in sympathy with the Jesuits; he even offered to bring her the *Augustinus* and explain it to her, but she flatly and perhaps wisely refused.

They continued their discussion until at last the Archbishop told Christine that the Community prayed in a spirit of obstinacy, and warned her as to what would probably happen if the nuns refused the signature, adding: "I would shed my blood to get you out of the plight you are in, and I am grieved to my heart that I cannot do it." So ended Christine Briquet's interview.

The Archbishop's visitation was concluded on 13th July. He assembled the Community and lectured them with considerable severity. His speech is far too long to quote, but amongst other things he said: "You prefer the private opinions of a small handful of people to the opinions of the Pope and of your Archbishop. These people have advised you and made you promise to support their side. . . . You will not convince me that you have not at least some of their writings; for I notice that the answers which several of you have given me are just the same thing which one finds in their works," and so on. He then concluded by giving them absolution and by enjoining

them to say daily the *Veni Creator* and the Collect of the Holy Spirit. They were also to receive a priest sent by him, as their confessor, M. Chamillard.

There arose a rather unseemly dispute between the Mother and the Archbishop, who lost his temper and descended to scolding and rating. He sat down in his chair and a long conversation ensued, during which the Archbishop and the Community argued and his attendant Chaplain put in a word now and then. The whole scene was undignified, but the impression left on one's mind by it is not wholly unfavourable to the Archbishop. He was not a very clever or a very saintly person, but neither was he cruel or unspiritual, or at all desirous to persecute the poor nuns, who, some of them at least, were more than a match for him. He entirely lacked dignity and weight and the power of persuasion which often accompanies a true saint, and is as often lacking to him who has attained but a respectable mediocrity in the School of Christ.

The hour had come and everyone prepared for the battle. M. d'Andilly wrote to his daughter Angélique de St Jean a letter, marking at once the courage of an Arnauld and the humility of the Port Royalist. He ends his letter :—

"I give to you, and to all your sisters, with all my heart (although I am a very great sinner) every blessing a father can give to children whom he entirely loves, and of whom he thinks it almost too blessed to be the father, when he sees in what way it has pleased God to receive them. Perhaps we may never meet again in this life, but what is this life? How can a Christian consider it?—when it is a question of faithfulness to God, so that we may hope for the eternal blessedness of that other life, in which He will be Himself our life. I give you back to Him, my dearest child, I put back into His hands the present He made me when you came into the world."

D'Andilly never appears to greater advantage than in this hour of persecution and sorrow. He had been a man of the world, a royal favourite, a person of

consideration in the great world. He had his own weaknesses; but he had always put God's service first, and now he was undaunted and ready to suffer gladly.

The Archbishop was quite unable, had he wished to do so, to mitigate any severity to the Community. The Queen herself (Anne of Austria), so it is said, not infrequently reminded him: "M. de Paris, recollect on what condition you received the Archbishopric of Paris; you have been appointed; it remains to be seen how you comport yourself."

The friends of Port Royal, and they were not a few, did their best during the next few weeks, especially the great ladies, Mme. de Longueville, Mme. de Sablé and others. M. Chamillard entered on his office as confessor. Christine Briquet wrote out an account of what he said to her concerning the signature after she had finished her confession—a proceeding which seems a little irregular. She wrote out also a long conversation she had with him after he had given her absolution, and, clever as she is, there is an unpleasant impression left on one. This young girl, so argumentative, so orthodox, so proudly humble, seems quite another species of "religieuse" than Jacqueline Pascal, and, above all, different from Mère Angélique.

It is very sad; perhaps all were to blame. Certainly there is such a thing as Church authority, and greatly as the Anglican principle is vilified and set at nought by our brethren of the Roman Communion, and little understood as it appears to be by many of the Church of England, it is perhaps questionable whether our attitude will not be justified at the bar of history, and that it may be, in His Mercy, by the Great Head of the Church. Those among us, who really represent the mind of the Church, feel that it is her work rather "to promote principles than to rely on precise and detailed guidance."[1] The Creeds do not deny authority, but, in the words of Bishop Gore, they hold that authority is not the same thing as absolutism, which is only an exaggerated and peculiar form of it.

[1] Dean Strong, *Authority in the Church.*

"True authority does not issue edicts to suppress men's personal judgment or render its action unnecessary, but it is like the authority of a parent, which invigorates and encourages, even while it restrains and guides the growth of our own individuality." And the Bishop goes on to quote Law's First Letter to the Bishop of Bangor, in which he says: "must there be such a thing as authority that is not absolute, or that does not require a blind implicit obedience." "I must protest" Bishop Gore continues, "that the authority of the Church is, as we Anglicans understand it, a most real guidance of our spirit and intellect, to which, by God's Mercy, we love to submit ourselves. Submission to that authority of the Church is the merging of our mere individualism in the whole historic life of the great Christian Brotherhood, it is making ourselves at one with the one religion in its most permanent and least merely local form. It is surrendering our individuality only to empty it of its narrowness. One with the Christianity of history, the Christianity of Creeds and Councils, we enter into the heritage of her dogmas and of something as great as her greatest dogmas, the whole joy of her Sacraments, the security of her Ministry, the Communion of her Saints, the fellowship of her Spirit. We can read her Great Fathers and find ourselves one with them in all matters of faith over the lapse of ages."[1]

This broad and admirable temper is, of course, the exact antithesis to ultramontanism. And the Port Royalists undoubtedly were in opposition to that spirit, the inheritance bequeathed by the Middle Ages, and all that the growth of the Papacy has involved. To crush is always easier than to persuade, and it is the human way, the human spirit.

We need not be surprised that a theologian of the calibre of Antoine Arnauld felt that he and his cause had had no hearing worth the name, and it is impossible to think that the belief about grace can ever be held in exactly the same way by all. It is, humanly speaking,

[1] *Roman Catholic Claims*, pp. 51-52.

one of the greatest barriers to unity that the ultramontane theory of Churchmanship has so completely dominated the Western Church, to such an extent, indeed, that in most people's minds it seems identical with and bound up with Catholicism. That the ultramontane view was not absolutely dominant in the French Church of the seventeenth century is evident from the Port Royal attitude.

M. Chamillard came one day in July and entreated the Sisters to sign this Formulary: "I submit myself to the two Constitutions of Popes Innocent X. and Alexander VII." He made a long speech, in which he said everything he could devise to quiet the consciences of the poor nuns; he was accompanied by another priest, one Père Esprit, who generally contrived to say the wrong thing, and the interview came to nothing. The Community prepared another Formulary and sent it to the Archbishop by the hands of M. Champagne, the painter. It ran thus: "We, the undersigned, profess entire submission to, and belief in, the faith; and on the 'fact' (fait), as we can have no satisfactory knowledge about it, we can form no judgment, but we beg to remain in that respect and silence which are suitable to our condition and state."

This document was of course useless; both M. Champagne and the Archbishop were plunged in misery; yet the Community was to be sacrificed, not really to the Pope, not to any real attack by any sober Churchmen, but to the dislike of Louis XIV. for any independent thought, and to the jealousy of another religious Order.

The Archbishop fell ill, and Port Royal prayed fervently for his recovery, and about the same time drew up the first of the many protests which were to emanate from them. It is wearisome to read, to say nothing else; the waste of time, the waste of energy, the waste of valuable material, make one at once indignant and sad.

The Archbishop, as soon as he possibly could, left his bed, and came "himself to bring us news of his

health." He pronounced a short discourse, and then saw the whole Community one by one. The Sisters, most of them, hung round Mère Agnès Arnauld in her room.

She opened her New Testament, and her eyes fell on the sad words: "This is your hour, and the power of darkness." Then the little band read part of the Passion together, and said some prayers to our Lord, as they waited on to see what the Archbishop would do. The Mother went to ask permission to say Vespers, or did he wish to speak to the Community? He told her to say that they could recite Vespers, as he did not wish to speak to them *en masse*, but suddenly changed his mind and sent for the whole body of Sisters. Then in tones of the utmost severity, he began:—

"If ever anyone had reason to be practically broken-hearted, that man is myself. I find you obstinate, rebellious, disobedient; I pronounce you unfit"—there was a pause—"unfit to participate in the Sacraments, and I forbid you to approach them."

After this speech, which we have shortened, he turned his back on the unfortunate Sisters, and prepared to leave. Then followed a terrible scene. The Archbishop seeing that various people had assembled in the courtyard, the Princesse de Guémenée among others, retreated into a private room, from which he emerged to order the Sisters to speak to no one.

The poor Mother tried to speak to him, but he cut her short: "Hold your tongue, you are nothing but a little piece of obstinacy and pride, with no intelligence, and you meddle with things of which you understand not an atom; you are only a little minx, a little fool, a little dunce, you don't know what you want to say; one need only look at your face to recognise you; one sees it in your face."

The Sisters crowded round him, trying to move him, and one of them said: "In Heaven we shall find a Judge who will judge us rightly." "Yes, yes," replied the much worried and entirely exasperated prelate, "when

we get there, we shall see the rights and wrongs of it all."

"You know our innocence," one or two said.

"Yes, I know," replied their pastor, "you are as pure as angels, and as proud as Lucifer; you think that you yourselves are more fit to decide about this command of mine, than all the directors and superiors in the world."

Then the Princesse de Guémenée met the incensed Archbishop in the courtyard, and he repeated to her the phrase so often employed to describe the Port Royalists —"Purity of angels—pride of Lucifer." At any rate, the Archbishop did not descend to the level of those who had accused the Community of neglect of the Sacraments, or who had preached to them about Sodom and Gomorrah, or the excommunicated man of St Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians.

He departed. The Community, borne up by that religious exultation, which possesses the soul in the first hours of suffering, proceeded to recite the *Miserere*, several other Psalms and prayers, and the Office of Vespers, and then betook themselves to their favourite occupation—they drew up an Act of Protest, and the next day Angélique de Saint Jean wrote to one of the best friends of the Community, Mademoiselle de Vertus, a long comment on the events of the preceding day. She says:—"This is what we have come to be, dogs which eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table. And from this place we cannot be driven, and thither we shall betake ourselves, so long as the Mass lasts, being present and sharing in it just as the penitent thief shared in the Sacrifice of our Lord, by the portion we have of His reproach, of His sufferings." She goes on to speak of her aunt, the Mère Agnès, "who, after having lived for seventy-one years an angel's life, is now numbered among criminals."

As a last resource, they addressed a solemn prayer to that very dear saint, Louis IX. of France, that he would intercede to God on their behalf; for had he not also been delivered into the hands of sinful men for the glory of God?

Port Royal was not friendless, and the inmates were kept well informed of what was known in the outside world about them. It was reported to them that the Archbishop was arranging that room should be found in different convents for some of the more recalcitrant. Very little sleep did the nuns seek on these terrible August nights, and prayers and bitter weeping were the portion of most. The Prioress, the Mother, Mère Agnès, all implored forgiveness of their Sisters for any faults into which they each might have fallen in the exercise of their office, and word having been brought on the 25th of August, that probably the Community would be dispersed on that day, one of the Sisters, Anne Eugénie, went to tell Mère Agnès. Meeting M. d'Andilly, she said with perfect calmness, but can we not imagine with what quivering lips: "Haec est dies quam fecit Dominus" (this is the day which the Lord hath made). Agnès rose and went down to see M. d'Andilly, "I cannot talk," she said, "but I can say 'Haec dies' with you." They recited the verse, and then she said: "We must put off our talk until we meet before God; the Community want me."

She went to the assembled Community and tried to utter words of comfort. Then came Terce, and the morning wore away in pious reading. About two o'clock Agnès came back to them, and said she had only a moment once again to ask forgiveness for every fault, "I beg you to pray to God that He will grant me the grace to use this condition on which I am entering for their amendment; and I entreat you if any one is spiteful enough to say I have signed—not to believe it—ever."

She had scarcely finished when news was brought that the Archbishop had come with seven or eight carriages. A burst of grief followed; can we not imagine that even the grave self-possessed Port Royalists would lose their control. They were Frenchwomen accustomed to show feeling. They loved their Mothers in Religion, they believed that in Port Royal, if not exclusively, at least pre-eminently, the Religious Life was really practised. What tears were shed! They

crowded again into Mère Agnès's room, Angélique representing to her that she must not refuse to give them her blessing, and they all struggled to embrace her. Their love entirely broke down all the reserve and reticence of Port Royal, but Angélique de St Jean, seeing that some of the novices would be completely overcome, gently restrained them, and "obedience more powerful than grief immediately choked their voices and gave vent only to tears."

In the sad moments when the Sisters were waiting for orders, the Mother having gone to meet the Archbishop, one of them, the aunt of Racine the poet, said to Mère Agnès that hitherto she had always felt that the verse in the Gospel "Ecce nos reliquimus omnia" troubled her, for she could not feel that *she* had left anything, and now she began to hope it might be true also of her that she had left all for Jesus Christ.

The Archbishop had for some reason or other brought a guard with him. In fact, the circumstance is rather an evidence of the suspicion which beset the royal minds that Port Royal was in reality a nest of conspirators and that a rescue might be attempted.

Indeed, as the compiler of this *Relation* remarks, "It was an extraordinary and unparalleled sight to see him who was our Father and Pastor in his double office of Archbishop and Superior so completely losing the feelings which are natural to both these, and losing them in connection with the most obedient of his daughters, so that he treated them as he might have done the most lawless and abandoned persons, by causing the house to be surrounded and by entering it himself guarded by archers who could be seen from the windows drawn up in order with muskets on their shoulders exactly as if they were in camp." But, absurd as it all seems, we who can perfectly remember blameless priests of our own Communion being haled to prison for practices now sanctioned, cannot afford to plume ourselves on our great superiority.

The Archbishop had in the meantime arrived at the entrance; he was met by M. d'Andilly, who threw

himself at M. de Péréfixe's feet, and begged that at least he might be allowed to remove his three daughters and his sister to Pomponne, his own estate, from which his eldest son, M. de Pomponne, at one time French Ambassador at the Court of Sweden, and a great friend of Mme. de Sévigné, took his title. This request was refused. The Sisters were assembled in the Chapel, and the Archbishop after a preamble came to the gist of his speech. The Mother (Agnès de Ligni), Mère Agnès Arnauld, Angélique de St Jean her niece, and nine others were to be removed to other Convents. The Mother arose and mildly protested, and the whole Community echoed, "nous protestons, nous protestons!" They implored him to consider that Mère Agnès, who was now seventy-three, would assuredly receive her deathblow. It was all in vain; the Sisters retired to make their hasty preparations, and Mother Agnès, who no doubt could not move very quickly, made him very angry by her tardiness.

Angélique de St Jean, always calm and collected, asked him respectfully, but with (surely) a little irony in her voice, if he would give the Sisters a written permission to leave, for as cloistered nuns they could not quit their Convent without it. This seemed in some degree to please M. de Péréfixe. They were behaving, he said, as good nuns should!

At last all was ready. Agnès could hardly climb into the carriage, but M. d'Andilly, who, as Sainte Beuve remarks, acted as Master of the Ceremonies, helped her to get in. She murmured to him as she took her place: "It seems, my brother, that it is as when Caiaphas said: 'It is expedient that one man die for the people, that the whole nation perish not.' So it is now, our house must be destroyed for the truth, so that all the rest do not lose it utterly."

Each of M. d'Andilly's daughters knelt at his feet and received his blessing, and he led each one in front of the altar as if to offer her again to God; he saw each of the Sisters into one of the four carriages, and the exiles were taken away.

The Archbishop seemed almost amused by this heart-rending scene, but some of his attendant clergy were horror-stricken.

The remainder of the Community returned to the Chapel and proceeded in the temporary absence of the Archbishop to say None.

M. de Péréfixe then made a searching examination of the garden, and found there one of the Solitaires, an Englishman, who for more than twenty years had lived first at Port Royal and then at Paris; he was rudely dismissed, and took refuge with the Duc de Liancourt.[1]

The legal authorities who had accompanied the Archbishop were somewhat annoyed to find themselves confronted by a band of innocent nuns, and left as soon as possible. And the Archbishop fumed, and fretted, and scolded, as he wandered about waiting for the nuns whom he intended to settle at Port Royal in the place of the exiles.

At last, at five o'clock, a carriage drew up, containing five of the religious from the convent of the Visitation. At their head was a not altogether undistinguished nun, Eugénie de Fontaine. This lady had been brought up in the Reformed Religion, and after her conversion to Catholicism had been a professed nun in the Community founded by Madame de Chantal, who, long ago, had been on terms of friendship with Mère Angélique. Mère Eugénie had had the office of "reforming" Port Royal proposed to her by the Queen Mother herself. The Archbishop himself admitted the new arrivals, amid the protestations of the Port Royalists. M. de Péréfixe ordered the Community to assemble in Chapter, and then with extreme tenderness and benignity, told them that he was about to give them a new Superior. Fresh protestations ensued, and the Archbishop, as usual, lost his temper and threatened them with unknown and terrific punishment if they refused to obey Mère

[1] The name of this "gentilhomme" was Francis Jenkins; he returned to Port Royal des Champs in 1669 and remained there until his death, 1690.

Eugénie, on whom he bestowed a panegyric, during which the newly arrived Mother and the Sisters knelt down. The Archbishop then installed the new Mother, whereupon many of these very recalcitrant Port Royalists left the Chapter, and the rest were with difficulty compelled to kiss Mère Eugénie. This over, M. Chamillard asked the Archbishop if it were possible to allow the Sisters (as one of them had requested) to approach the Sacraments, and the prelate said he would leave that to the confessor, M. Chamillard.

The Archbishop went away. The Port Royalists drew up a *Procès verbal*, and this miserable day ended. It may be imagined that the relations between the newcomers and the Port Royalists were considerably strained. The Mother, Mère Eugénie, was, as we should say nowadays, a thorough-going ultramontane, and looked upon blind obedience as the highest virtue; for the rest, they were all good religious, but one of them especially seems to have won the heart of the Port Royalists by her gentleness and piety. She was related to the unfortunate M. Fouquet,[1] whose tragic fate has been so admirably narrated by Mme. de Sévigné.

But nothing could make the situation anything but intolerable, and no doubt the Port Royalists were not disposed to look on the Sisters of the Order of the Visitation with favourable eyes. It is a little odd perhaps, as one reads the *Histoire*, to note how the chief defect in these "Visitation Nuns" was their principle of blind obedience. Yet, after all, the essential of the Religious Life *is* obedience, and we cannot but feel that there is something to be said for their point of view when we read the account of the younger Sisters, Christine Briquet, and Eustachie de St Brégy.

There was now dissension in Port Royal.

Sœur Flavie, who we may remember had been the

[1] Fouquet had been Louis XIV.'s financial minister; he was tried for dishonesty and condemned to lifelong imprisonment in 1661. He had been decidedly on the side of Port Royal—another cause for Louis XIV.'s dislike of the Community.

first to notice the miraculous cure worked on Marguerite Périer, was a traitor in the camp. Her great work was by dissimulation ; she was suspected by her Sisters, who were warned by outsiders that someone within had betrayed them to the Archbishop. The confessor, M. Chamillard, was continually calumniating those who had been taken away, and "scenes" were of continued occurrence. Several nuns gave way, nor is it a matter of amazement that they did so. Christine Briquet and Eustachie de St Brégy lived in constant expectation of being taken away to other Convents, and the daily life grew more and more intolerable. Mère Eugénie was disconcerted and offended by the portions from books which were read aloud at meals, and sometimes accused the readers of inventing what they read. The works of St Augustine had to be banished.

It was all petty, intolerable. A house noted for lofty piety, care for the poor, simplicity, and austerity of life, was broken up and on the verge of ruin.

Several poor Sisters again yielded, one a sister of M. du Fossé, from whose memoirs we have quoted. It is piteous to read the account of her misery. She came before the assembled Community, and, kneeling down, sobbed out a confession, ending: "I entreat you to believe that I will never do anything against you, and I pray God with all my heart that if I have offended Him (but I do not think I have, for what I did was out of pure obedience), He will punish me in this world."

This sort of life went on for about four years. In the meanwhile M. de Péréfixe paid a visit to Port Royal des Champs, but failed to make any impression on the Community there. At the Paris house, Sœur Melthide had retracted her signature. The Archbishop arrived one night, terrifying the Sisters so much that several fainted. He did what had been expected, carried off the two ringleaders, Eustachie de St Brégy and Christine Briquet, and also Sœur Melthide. Both Eustachie and Christine, clever, witty, and high-spirited nuns, with not a little pride (and, in the case of Christine, some youthful exuberance), had been a good deal tormented by

their relations. Port Royal des Champs, although free from dissensions, was not in much better case, as the inmates thereof were deprived of the Sacraments, and that much loved physician, M. Hamon, was obliged to retire from Port Royal. And on the 15th of February 1665, Pope Alexander VII., urged by some of the French Bishops, published a Bull which struck a heavy blow at Jansenism. The five condemned propositions were, this Bull declared, extracted from the book entitled *Augustinus*, and were condemned in the sense attributed to them by Jansenius.

Now, no one of the so-called Jansenists ever hesitated to condemn the five propositions—what they did refuse was to acknowledge by an unconditional subscription that these propositions were in the *Augustinus*, or that Jansenius held these doctrines. To this Bull the condemned party calmly replied that no Pope could issue such a Bull. In fact, the Jansenist party, with all their faults, stood for true Catholic principles against ultramontanism; they are the spiritual ancestors of those who withstood the Vatican decrees of 1870.

The compiler of the *Histoire de Port Royal* has this significant comment: "In order to exact such an oath, the Pope must regard himself as infallible in these kinds of facts, and this may be regarded as a new heresy invented by the Jesuits."

Various propositions were made; one was, that a conference should be held, but the Prioress of Port Royal des Champs was not unnaturally alarmed at the idea, especially when she found that Angélique de St Jean was to be excluded by the wish of M. de Paris.

The Easter Communion was denied to the poor nuns. There came a day when Anne of Austria, who held Mère Eugénie in high favour, paid a visit to Port Royal. One of the unfortunate Sisters flung herself at Anne of Austria's feet, imploring her to intercede for them, that they might have Holy Communion. "Obey; what nuns, to disobey their Archbishop; what a horrible thing!" was Anne of Austria's angry reply.

It is sad reading, this *Histoire des Persecutions*, the pettiness, the angry bickerings, the sharp criticisms of the nuns of the Visitation, and the contempt which the Port Royalists express for Mère Eugénie, do make us feel that the second generation of Port Royal is not of the same spirit as the first.

But Mère Agnès and her niece, Angélique de St Jean, and M. de St Marthe were ever on a high plane. The last named writes :—

"It is a great consolation for us to learn by experience that in our conflicts for Jesus Christ, there is no need of great intelligence, great knowledge, or extraordinary virtue. Children, the imperfect and the ignorant, can always vanquish when He Who invites them to the fight fights in them and gives them the victory. We have always reasons to fear, since only perseverance to the end will complete our salvation ; but we have also great reasons to hope that God Who has begun His work will finish it."

A volume, *Apologie pour les Religieuses du Port Royal*, is still to be found in collections of Port Royal literature, with lengthy letters (*procès verbaux*) addressed to the Archbishop, and a protracted correspondence between M. de Paris and Henri Arnauld, Bishop of Angers, and son of Antoine Arnauld, the "père de tous les nôtres." The Bishop of Angers had all the courage of his family and defended the unfortunate Port Royalists with skill, courtesy, and fearlessness. He points out that the persecution of Port Royal was no new thing, and that the animosity which had broken out so strongly against Jansenius and against Port Royal was due to the Jesuits. As one reads M. d'Angers's letters, one perceives how nearly akin he is to the really best and most representative of our Anglican teachers.

Port Royal and all its friends were a sort of breakwater for the time against ultramontanism. And from *their* point of view the Jesuits were perfectly right in desiring to suppress Port Royal. Louis XIV. was

an admirable coadjutor, and M. de Péréfixe was unable to take anything but a narrow and temporary view.

The point on which the Bishop of Angers seizes is not whether the nuns were to be justified or punished for refusing to sign the Formulary, but the extreme injustice of proposing to them, or exacting from them, such a signature. And indeed this is the point. Why engage a convent of women in abstruse theological discussions and exact from them a signature, which, if given blindly (according to their favourite phrase—"une aveugle obéissance), was purely valueless; and, if given with knowledge, implied past study of and comprehension of a difficult book, and condemnation of teachers, theologians, directors, revered and justly revered by them?

M. de Paris replied with a good deal of acrimony, and M. d'Angers rejoined in dignified and respectful but very weighty terms. In this second letter M. d'Angers's great point is that there is no such thing as the Jansenian heresy. No one dreams of maintaining the famous Five Propositions; and as for the supposed heresy concerning grace, the Jansenists were entirely in accordance with St Thomas Aquinas. It was ridiculous to make it a point of faith to affirm, a heresy to deny, that these propositions were in the *Augustinus*.

He points out how possible it is for the spirit of the Pharisees to arise in the Church: "This man is not of God, he keepeth not the Sabbath day." "But," continues the Bishop: "They did not say that if He did not keep the Sabbath day in a slavish obedience, it was only that He might do good to men by His miracles."

"However, Monseigneur," he goes on with hardly suppressed indignation, "this is the way in which the imaginary sect of Jansenist heretics has been founded."

The Bishop makes an excellent point when he cites the case of the Decretals:—It is mostly heretics who deny them, but would it be wise for any Pope to insist on every theologian signing a formulary that they were genuine? yet many more Popes have approved these

Decretals than have as yet condemned Jansenius, and the people who reject them are certainly generally heretics."

There is a touch of chivalry, of the Arnauld spirit, in his words: "I am not persuaded that it is unworthy of those who wear the mitre of a Bishop to be the champions of those who they believe are unrighteously oppressed."

He also points out that extreme indulgence is shown to the Jesuits, and goes on at great length and with considerable acumen to throw doubt on the powers of any Bishop to exact signatures of the kind in question from religious, and says that this way of exacting submission, outward and inward, was not calculated to make for peace; in most solemn terms he reminds Monseigneur de Paris that our Lord Himself "does not wish us to tyrannise over the souls which are so dear to Him, Whom He has redeemed with His Own Blood. It is His Will that they should be directed by us with charity, and insight, that we should teach them what they ought to do, not that we should make them act without any judgment.

"God Himself desires from us a reasonable service and willing sacrifices. How is it possible then for us, who are but His ministers, to propose to treat as beasts, or as slaves, those whom He has deigned to make His children, and to refuse to them any reasons for the commands we give them? . . .

"I do not see, Monseigneur, if we enforce the signature of the Formulary, how we can dispense ourselves from saying precisely and clearly whether we mean to imply by that an inward belief of the truth of the fact, or simply that we desire respect and silence.

"For, as I have said, the signature is a mode of speech in itself; and it is against every right, human and divine, to compel a man to use any mode of speech which is unintelligible to him. If an explanation is refused him, he is in his right if he explains for himself an obscure and equivocal speech, to be corrected if he does so badly. But it is an absolutely baseless idea, that there is any law of the Church which takes away

this freedom, and which blames persons for not being content simply to sign their names.

"Indeed, Monseigneur, it is astonishing to see with what boldness new writers impose on us new laws, new maxims, and new Canons of which we have never heard."

These extracts show how entirely Catholic, how absolutely unultramontane, was Henri d'Angers. If only his wise counsels had prevailed, if only his temper of mind, so akin to the words we have quoted on p. 318 from some writers of our own Communion and our own day, had prevailed, what might not have been the later history of Christendom? How much nearer towards realisation would be the unity of the Church!

We will now turn to the exiles. Mère Agnès, who was now very old and infirm, seems to have received nothing but kindness from the nuns into whose house she had been sent. She writes to her brother, M. d'Andilly: "I am in a place where charity reigns to anticipate all my needs. For the rest, you would wish that I should drink the cup which our Heavenly Father has prepared for me, and that I may wish that He should inebriate me with it, so that I may forget all things save Jesus, and Jesus crucified. This is my second vocation, for my first one did not afford me such suitable and efficacious means for imitating the Son of God in His life of obscurity and of humility. I desire to be hidden in that life with Him. I should say 'we,' for my dear companion feels just the same, and has proposed a renewal of our Religious Life in this changed state of things, in which we are compelled to sacrifice to God at each moment everything we hold most dear; this is a duty binding on all who would be His, but all of us fail more or less in it and act with reserves [towards God]. . ."

She writes to M. d'Angers that although she and those with her can get no news of their friends outside, yet, so far as their treatment from the nuns of the Visitation is concerned, "we receive from them every

help we could desire in anything of which we have need."

Agnès was full of tenderness. She had with her a niece, another daughter of M. d'Andilly, Angélique de Sainte Thérèse. This poor child was won over, chiefly by the Abbé Bossuet, hereafter to be known as a stern opponent of a liberal school of thought. Agnès was very tender to this niece. She felt some penitence a little later for their indifference about the signature; but indeed, as M. Sainte Beuve has pointed out, Agnès's vocation was a vocation of prayer, not of controversy, and these miserable controversies must have appeared so extraordinarily insignificant in view of the Eternity to which she was drawing so near. Angélique de St Jean was another order of being. She had a *grand esprit;* it is to her that we chiefly owe the notes on Mère Angélique's life in the *Mémoires pour Servir*, and she had a great admiration for Pascal. Sainte Beuve says of her that the *Récit* of her imprisonment which she drew up, reveals to us "une âme forte, triste, capable de toutes les belles agonies, une âme grande aussi dans son ordre et admirable." The story of Angélique was only printed after the complete ruin of Port Royal.

Angélique's story is extraordinarily interesting. She makes us realise the sadness of the exile from Port Royal, and how she struggled to sing Psalms and Hymns and spiritual songs in her heart, "'Urbs Beata' (Blessed City) among others, trying to represent to herself that she and the other Sisters were living stones, cut and polished for that living Temple."

Angélique was sent to the Convent of the Annunciation; she exchanged a few hasty words with the young priest who had accompanied her, and who showed himself friendly, and when the Superior appeared, he said: "Madame, I bring you a saint; all the Port Royalist Sisters are saints." Angélique and he took leave of each other, and she knelt down and promised obedience to the Superior as long as she was in the house. With the Superior came Madame de Rantzau,

known in Religion as La Mère Elisabeth, the widow of a celebrated general. She was a German by birth, had been converted to Catholicism, and was supposed to have a special genius for controversy.

They first went to the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception, and Angélique's comment is curious and interesting. "I was taken first to the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception; this Mystery was new to me, for with us there are no altars dedicated to any disputed doctrine; but, all the same, in this place I was possessed with a particular devotion, and it was to throw myself into the arms of the Holy Mother of sweet comfort."

From the Chapel they went into the garden, and poor Angélique could not keep back her tears on being questioned on the day's events. Nevertheless, both the Superior and Mme. de Rantzau professed perfect ignorance of all controversial matters. Everything seemed to be done to make her comfortable. A lay Sister was told off to wait on her, and she had permission to attend the Offices or not as she pleased. So the evening passed away, and Angélique prepared for rest. "But when the night had come and I lay down to rest, I felt as if my mind had been numb until then, and that all at once it, as it were, fell from a height on my heart, which was bruised by the blow. For in a moment I felt myself broken down, torn on every side by the separations I had so lately gone through and by the agony of all those whom I had left in as great affliction as my own."

It was indeed a frightful situation. Angélique was now forty years of age, and for thirty-four years she had been an inhabitant of Port Royal—for twenty years a nun. She was torn at once from her natural protectors, her father, her aunts, from her sisters in Religion, and from her spiritual guides. She was in a strange Community, who had been imbued with other ideas than those of Port Royal, and she was only in early middle life; what was to be the end?

Mass and the Offices brought her much comfort, as did an hour spent before the Blessed Sacrament. This

devotion, of "Visits to the Blessed Sacrament," so attractive and comforting to many souls, was, it will be remembered, a recent development in devotional practice.[1] Angélique says she was rather frightened at first, for this devotion was a good deal restricted at Port Royal; but the knowledge that our Lord would hear her gave her strength, and she poured out her troubles.

Everyone was very kind. Angélique did not notice at first that she was virtually a prisoner, but she soon discovered that she was locked up in her little room during the intervals between meals and Offices. And it added not a little to her misery to find that the confessors of the Annunciation were Jesuits, Père Nouet among them, he who had so long ago fulminated against *La Fréquente Communion.*

The first days of anguish and separation passed; they seemed as years. She hardly saw anyone except the lay Sister who attended to her wants, and who was "a very good girl, strong and gentle and most careful to anticipate my every need, so that, as she said, I should ask for nothing and complain of nothing."

And Angélique says she was truly touched by the kindness of the Community, because it seemed they might have treated her quite harshly.

She entered meantime the second period of sorrow, the period which most Christians are called upon at times to experience, the time when God seems to hide His face, and from the very depths of the soul comes the cry: "Is it worth while?" Terrible doubts, the temptation to abandon the struggle rushed in upon her, and no spiritual joy and consolation came to her. She describes in a letter to her uncle, Antoine Arnauld, how she felt inclined to question the elementary truths of religion. Like many another strong soul, Angélique faced the black abyss of doubt. Pascal is her spiritual kinsman. It is the way by which God tries many elect souls; they are brought into a wilderness; they go

[1] See Father Thurston in a Preface to *Coram Sanctissimo.*

through fire and water; but they are at last brought into a wealthy place.

And in time the peace of God came back to Angélique's strong soul; she was sent for a few days to hear Mass and the Offices in a Chapel behind the Altar, in order that a relative of one of the Port Royal Sisters might not see her, and in this poor bare little place she experienced much happiness. She heard that her father had written to the Mother, who gave M. d'Andilly's letter to Angélique, and permitted her to write a line to him in reply.

As Advent of this melancholy year, 1664, drew on, Angélique absented herself wholly from the Divine Office and the Mass, in order to escape sermons preached by Jesuit Fathers. Most probably she would have heard controversial matter and many unkind and untrue statements; in order to avoid any remark she herself proposed to the Superior that she should be confined in her cell. She had one of those intensely happy seasons, one of those foretastes of joy, one of those sojourns in that land of Beulah where "the sun shineth night and day, wherefore this was beyond the Valley, the shadow of death, and also out of the reach of Giant Despair; neither could they from this place so much as see Doubting Castle."

She says herself:—

"At these times, when I did not go out on Festivals and Sundays to be present at Church, I made a Church of my prison and I sang by myself nearly all the Office at our ordinary hours. I sang also what the Choir sings at High Mass, when I knew it, and at least the Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, and Agnus Dei, and I mentally followed the priest's part of the Sacrifice of the Mass, for a Missal had been lent me. So I spent nearly an hour and a half in this way, and had not much leisure in which to be wearied; my morning was as well filled up as if I had been at home. I made Processions round my room, holding a cross in my hand and singing what ought to be sung. On Sundays I asperged all the wall of my room, saying, "Asperges me," and my intention was that by this aspersion every

spiritual malice might be expelled, for I feared temptation to all, so much the more as I had no one to defend me. I threw holy water on the bed to expel the spirit of sloth; on the table where I ate, against daintiness; on the side of the bed which I used as an oratory, to remove all distractions; on the corner of the room where I worked, to ensure me from curiosity and from being too much set on my work; but above all on the door of my room, for fear lest the spirit of false persuasion should enter with those who tried to bring it, or at least, lest impatience or indiscretion should lead me into faults when my solitude was broken into by some visit."

But she was still deprived of the Eucharist. She had sent a note to the Superior begging for it on Christmas Day, but she very reluctantly told her that the Archbishop would not consent. Angélique said later: "I thought I had communicated with her at this great Festival, for Jesus Christ is not limited to one single means of communicating His grace," and the Mother showed much sympathy. Angélique lived, at any rate, with good and spiritual religious. She continued her weary imprisonment, spending the day in carefully arranged hours of prayer, reading St Bernard, walking up and down her room reciting a Litany of Intercession, and working at small tasks of needlework. Madame de Rantzau and she had some correspondence, and they also had occasional conversations. On Christmas Day Angélique left her cell and was present at Mass, and was sent to pray before the Blessed Sacrament during the sermon at Vespers. And when she did listen to sermons, she owns that she was edified and helped. For indeed it is lamentable that such holy and devout people, as were the Port Royalists and the great rank and file of the Jesuits, could not have met and agreed in their common love of Christ. It is nearly always the leaders in a party who prevent reconciliation. She described at some length the sermon of the Jesuit on grace, and her sketch of it shows how much more Christians agree than they usually think. Angélique herself is surprised, and says she supposes that he had

more light than most of them. "Grâce à Dieu." For Port Royalists lacked that grace of charity when it was a question of the Company of Jesus. A little more liberty was granted to Angélique at the beginning of the year; but she grew more and more depressed as to Port Royal, and saw no probable end to their oppression.

A terrible moment came on Angélique, when she was suddenly told that one of the Sisters had signed, and she was given to understand that Mère Agnès would probably do so also. Poor Angélique passed a night of prayers and tears, feeling, she says, like St Peter about to sink; "but at last, after a long time and many tears and cries, all in a moment God gave back peace to my mind by a strong inclination which He gave me to lean on the truth of His promises." And she went to sleep quite peacefully, certain that her beloved aunt, Mère Agnès, would assuredly not be of those who should give way.

Angélique had many conversations with the Superior of the Community. Angélique's comments are not always edifying reading—she is apt to be a little sharp, a little censorious. She has a remarkable criticism: "Madame de Rantzau was, in my opinion, the last person ever to allow herself to be instructed, because she was far too much possessed with the idea that she knew everything; and it would seem that when she came out from heresy and schism, she fixed her Catholicity firmly on the absolute belief in the infallibility of the Pope, and said of it . . . that should this foundation be shaken, our faith would have no further support; . . . it seems that people who are brought up among heretics, are much inclined to pass from one extreme to another, and leave the truth which lies in the '*Mean.*'"

The Superior seems to have been a most earnest religious, kind, affectionate, and full of devotion, "qui prend sur elle toute la charge des autres pour soulager celles qui ont trop de travail," and she was really anxious to be as kind to Angélique as she possibly could be, in every way. Angélique was clever with her

hands, and modelled little figures in wax, and made herself really loved by the Superior.

On the 27th of November the two leading spirits, Sœur Eustachie and Sœur Christine, and also Sœur Françoise de Ste Claire, were also removed from Port Royal; the Archbishop came early in the day, and appeared as they were holding their Chapter. The Mother Eugénie was called out, and conducted them in, the irrepressible Sœur Flavie carrying the candles. Then ensued the usual scene, a long address from the Archbishop, various attempts to soften him, and the inevitable *procès verbal*, which habit of the Port Royalists especially annoyed M. de Péréfixe.

There was a good deal of confusion at the departure, and at last the Sisters insisted on all taking a solemn oath on the Gospels that they were not disobedient, during which ceremony the Archbishop kept exclaiming: "Cela vous servira de beaucoup, voilà une cérémonie qui vous sera bien utile," and he drove away amid the usual cries and prayers for the Sacraments.

Poor helpless nuns; could not Antoine Arnauld have averted all this misery? Perhaps not; and it is not unexampled in our own age to see the forces of persecution turned, not on the rich, or the lax, but on poor and devout servants of Christ, for some supposed error. Christine Briquet's faults were, as Sainte Beuve says, her impetuosity and her youth. She was a clever little nun, and Sainte Beuve thinks that she would probably have gone much further in her defence of freedom of thought, had she lived a century later. She was placed in the Convent Sainte Marie in Paris; at this period she was not very spiritual, but depth and devotion came in later years. Eustachie de Brégy, in her Convent of the Ursulines, enjoyed occasional fencing matches with the Archbishop, who rather played on her weakness for display.

And there were poor Sisters who signed, and whose fall sent shudders through Port Royal.

In the meantime an idea had sprung up that the whole rebellious Community should be sent to Port

Royal des Champs, the Paris House abandoned, and the nuns kept in the country in a sort of imprisonment. The king was not particularly pleased at having to pay pensions for the nuns who had been boarded out in other Religious Houses, and Mère Eugénie, on being consulted by the Queen Mother, highly approved of the scheme. Naturally enough, she thought it would be pleasanter to rule over an undivided Community. Mère Agnès was consulted and at once agreed; but some of the nuns of Port Royal de Paris, whose spokeswoman was Sœur Geneviève de l'Incarnation, after reflection saw a good many objections. After all, to many Port Royal de Paris was a real home. For them Port Royal des Champs had no associations, and even Mère Agnès was not to them what she had been to an older generation—the generation of her niece Angélique de St Jean.

Naturally, those who were waiting to bring about this amelioration of the condition of the nuns were considerably exasperated by this reception, and M. Chamillard, who was working hard in their behalf, complained rather bitterly to Mère Agnès. She wrote to the Port Royal nuns who were at Paris several letters, which were at once gentle and conciliatory. She pointed out that this change to Port Royal des Champs was not meant as an increase of punishment, but rather as a mitigation of their sad fate. "Je regarde," she writes, "notre réunion comme le plus grand avantage qui nous puisse arriver." She seems a little hurt at the lack of joy shown by the Sisters at the prospect of this reunion, and indeed the said Sisters were extraordinarily exasperating to M. de Péréfixe. Nevertheless, there was a great deal of sense in the attitude which they took up; they did not think it was wise to relinquish their Paris house, unless they were satisfied that they could return. To leave so cherished a spot in the possession of those Sisters who had signed the Formulary and of the strange nuns was to them "une espèce de sacrilège."

However, after several characteristic protests, these scruples were overcome, and on the 3rd of July, 1665, the

Archbishop accompanied by several clergy, arrived, read the Community a short lecture, the substance of which was that the Sisters should set out at once for Port Royal des Champs. Thirty departed in carriages provided by the Archbishop, and at their head marched Sœur Geneviève de l'Incarnation, who, as she came out, advanced towards the prelate, knelt down, and uttered a solemn protest. A few Sisters were kept back for a short time, partly in the hope that they might be won over, and partly in order not to leave the Paris House quite at the mercy of the submissive members, who do not seem to have greatly pleased the Archbishop.

In the meantime, the order had gone forth that those first prisoners exiled in other convents should be released. Angélique de St Jean has left us a full account of her own departure.

She had just begun to say Compline, when the Superior entered her room and said that one of the Archbishop's principal chaplains was waiting for her with a carriage. Angélique gives a graphic account of her hasty preparations and her agonised hunt for the manuscript account of her captivity which she had written, and which she had somehow contrived to mislay and only discovered at the last moment. She seems to have won the heart of the nuns, and the Superior came to bid her most tender farewells. And so, feeling not a little alarmed, Angélique set off in the carriage and was driven whither she knew not. There was another lady in the carriage who observed to her that it was a most extraordinary hour for a "religieuse" to be taken away, but it could not be helped; the Archbishop had returned very late from St Germain (the royal residence). Angélique replied: "It is quite right, Madame, that we should be as prompt to carry out the commands of God as others are in the execution of the orders of the Court." The strange lady then went on to speak of Port Royal in laudatory terms, but Angélique contrived to cut her short and resumed her prayers.

After a long time the priest reappeared, conducting a veiled nun, who got into the carriage. "I could not

see her," writes Angélique, "but I had no time to doubt who she was; she threw herself on my neck, saying: 'It is my aunt!'—'What, it is my child!'" This was Christine Briquet, who seems to have adopted Angélique as her aunt. Not another word did they say, but Angélique writes: "This experience helped me to understand what it must have been to Mary Magdalene when she heard Jesus Christ calling her by her own name." What depth of agony, what heights of joy those simple words reveal! And little Christine herself writes that it was easy for her to recognise that by God's infinite mercy she had regained her whom He had given back to Christine, "the one whom He had given me to enlighten my steps, and teach me to walk in the path of the commandments and in truth." Well does M. Sainte Beuve call these words magnificent, and full of insight—they give us exactly the conception of Mère Angélique de Saint Jean, which the second Port Royal had formed.

On the carriage drove in the darkness and the not too safe streets of Paris into which the Superior of Angélique's Convent of exile had been unwilling to send her at that hour.[1] The travellers proceeded beyond the gate of the city, which was already locked, and out into the country. By-and-by they stopped at the door of a Convent, and were kept waiting a long time. Presently the door opened, and they saw several nuns awaiting them, who, having gone to bed, had been obliged to get up and dress, "n'ayant pas la commodité que nous avons de ne déshabiller jamais," Angélique naïvely remarks.

These luxurious people, having made their toilettes, received Mère Angélique with extreme kindness, and after embracing her two sisters, who, poor things, had signed, and who were full of contrition, she went up-

[1] Boileau says:

"Les voleurs à l'instant s'emparent de la ville.
Le bois le plus funeste et le moins frequenté
Est, au prix de Paris, un lieu de sûreté."

stairs to her beloved aunt Mère Agnès. They spent some time in this Convent, waiting for another carriage, which arrived in a few hours, and then they proceeded on their journey.

The party now consisted of Mère Agnès, Mère Angélique and her sisters, and Christine Briquet. It was a long journey, some eighteen miles. As soon as they had started, Prime, and the beautiful *Itinerarium*, or Office, to be said before or on a journey, were recited. Then Angélique took a Bible and asked Mère Agnès to open it at random—"un sort sacré." Agnès's eye fell on this passage: "Væ pastoribus qui disperdunt"—"Woe unto the shepherds that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture."[1]

Angélique tells the story herself, and writes:

"Can one doubt that there is a Providence in such apparently chance lightings on certain passages?"

And at last the exiles reached their haven, the first Port Royal, the true home of the devoted Community. They were received by the Prioress, the Mère du Fargis, and Angélique writes: "We thus ended our journey in safety, and arrived all together, in this deserted and desolated house; which seemed at first so lonely, for we only saw two of our old servants coming to meet us, instead of the people who used to meet us, when in former days we arrived in smaller numbers.

"There were no bells, no bonfires, as in those days when Mère Angélique returned. But it was even better to see in one moment the old Church filled with Sisters, who, by the colour of their habit, seemed to symbolize that they had washed their robes in the Blood of the Lamb, the Blood symbolized by the red crosses.

"We threw ourselves all together on our knees at the feet of the good Shepherd who had gathered together His scattered sheep."

Mère du Fargis had the true Port Royal calmness and presence of mind, with all the high-bred courtesy of a great lady. She made a formal protest which some-

[1] Jer. xxiii. 1.

what surprised the peaceful Mère Agnès. The Community were not long left in doubt as to what was to be their fate. They were to be as prisoners in their own house. The confessor of Port Royal des Champs was compelled to leave, and as his successor, a young priest from Savoy was introduced, who was almost illiterate, and who had not yet said his first Mass! In vain did the Prioress remonstrate, all she could gain was the presence of another and younger priest, also a Savoyard.

On the evening of this 3rd of July 1665, a number of guards commanded by M. de Saint Laurent arrived and put Port Royal into a state of siege. Even the little garden where the poor Sisters were accustomed to walk was locked up. The servants and the faithful M. Charles were forbidden, on pain of hanging, to carry any communication from the nuns to the outside world.

Some relaxation of this horrible surveillance was obtained to the extent of allowing the poor nuns at times to walk in their own garden. M. de Saint Laurent was suspicious and always on the watch; he sometimes spent an hour or two of the night under a tree, hoping to surprise someone from the outside world communicating with the Community.

It is remarkable how completely the Court was possessed with the idea that Port Royal was a centre of plots against the established order of things.

It was suspected, not unjustly, that M. Antoine Arnauld and the rest of "ces messieurs" would try their best to keep up the hearts of their faithful followers. But what else was suspected? It is difficult to realise the virulent hatred of Louis XIV. for any body or any movement which dared to organise itself independently of him—of the Court. How fatal this monstrous egoism proved to France is a matter of history. The best and noblest of her children were driven from her, until at last the hour of vengeance came, not ushered in by Psalms, by the chant of "Exurgat Deus," but by blood and slaughter and the cry of "Ecrasez l'Infâme."

It is impossible to estimate the misery of these sad days. The Community did not at first lose heart. They received with great joy the Abbess, who had been at the Convent of the Daughters of Sainte Marie de Meaux, and some of the Sisters from Paris who had signed and who now repented. One after another, at the Chapter held after their arrival, knelt and confessed her error, imploring forgiveness; but the climax was reached when the saintly and beloved Mère Agnès knelt down before the Altar and confessed that she had regarded the matter of the signature too much in a purely indifferent light.

"I consider," she went on, "our re-union not as a consequence of my prayers, or as a reward for my goodness, but as a help which He vouchsafes to my weakness."

Several other Sisters accused themselves of this terrible fault—"indifference." Poor people—so harassed, so brave, so mercilessly persecuted.

Three months were granted to the unfortunate Community to think over their ways, and as usual they drew up a protest.

The Archbishop completely lost patience. "Haven't you seen that Mère Prieure," he said to one of his Clergy, "that Du Fargis, she treats me as if I were a small boy—I will never speak to her again; next Friday I will excommunicate them." And excommunicated they were. After the sentence was read, the Sisters exclaimed that they appealed to every tribunal, and above all to our Lord.

And now a very miserable time began. Spied on by guards, worn out, many of them with illness, cut off from the Sacraments (this deprivation did not extend to the lay Sisters, and probably not a few choir Sisters approached the Altar in the habit of their humbler colleagues); they had left to them one helper, M. Hamon, the well-beloved physician. He was all that anyone not a priest could be; he comforted, exhorted, composed beautiful little meditations, assisted the dying. Few characters in the Port

Royal roll of saints are more beautiful and simple than his.

A few quotations from him will show how deeply spiritual he was. After saying how great is their loss in that their spiritual guides have been withdrawn, he writes: "We agree that you have suffered a great loss. But you must also agree that you have received a greater joy. For man cannot surpass God in anything, and least of all in generosity, in greatness. They have taken away your fathers, but have they taken away the God of your fathers? Deus Patrum Nostrorum—when you lost your fathers, He became afresh your Father in a very special way. He is your Father because you are the daughters and the spouses of His Son, but He is your Father also in another way because you have no other.

"He does (this is a wonderful thought) now through Himself what He is accustomed to do through His Ministers, and you receive directly from Himself what you are used to receive from their hands. Although you have no priest, have you not the High Priest and Bishop of your souls, who is your spouse? Can He fail you?"

He has a word about the Ethiopian eunuch who did not fret himself on account of Philip's departure. He did not put his trust in the possession of the Evangelist, but in the Gospel (Evangel), which remained graven in his heart and which filled him with joy.

He quotes St François de Sâles, who remarks somewhere that with so many more Communions, and absolutions, and sermons, and books, and outward aids in general, the men of his generation were far inferior in piety to the early hermits. "We do not," Hamon says, "seek piety where it is really, and we look for it where it is not. We make it consist in speaking about God, in hearing about Him, rather than in doing what He has ordered us to do and in obeying the Commandments. We must not say then: 'Who will nourish us?' For we have always Jesus Christ, Who is Himself the Bread of Life, and the High

Priest Who will distribute it Himself if men are lacking.

"We shall live by the union which we shall have with the whole Church, which proceeds from the Spirit of the Father and from the influence of the Head who never fails any of His members."

There is much more of the same gentle, deeply spiritual thought. M. Hamon also wrote a treatise on the Principles of Conduct in Defence of Truth; in this he shows that clear insight into principles which is so striking a characteristic of his. The great point on which he insists is the absolute ignoring of one's personal point of view (a counsel of perfection little regarded in controversy.) He cites many examples from early Church history. He then asks whether reserve is permitted in our witness to truth, and replies that humility and simplicity will answer this question. And he goes on to discuss courage and its opposite quality, rashness.

"Prayer, silence, and hope in God are our whole strength; we must sum up in these our defence, our justification."

The whole treatise breathes this same spirit. "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." Hamon's views on obedience are very clear. Anything like blind obedience is hateful to him; he sees quite plainly when to obey ceases to be a duty, and yet he is quite clear as to the general obligation of obedience.

There is also a book of his, *Pratique de la Prière Continuelle, ou Sentimens d'une Ame vraiment touchée de Dieu*, which is very beautiful. It is redolent with that calm, uplifted spirit, characteristic of some of those who live very near to God. Hamon speaks in the words of Holy Scripture; he lives in the atmosphere of the Psalms, of the Gospels; he lives also in the atmosphere of Sacramental Grace, in the sense of the extraordinary and unique blessing conveyed in the Eucharist, which one misses so much in Protestantism. He seems as one turns over his pages to be very much akin to us of the English Church. He seems

to speak the language of many of our most beloved saints and teachers.

"O my soul," he writes in a meditation on Death, "Jesus Christ is thy life; if thou wouldest love any other life than His, fear death, but if death has lost the dominion it had over us and is itself the slave of Jesus Christ . . . shall they fear death who obey Jesus Christ? . . .

"Jesus Christ, who has chosen the time and circumstances of His death, will choose the time and the circumstances of ours. . . .

"O God, transfer the agony of our death to the time of our life, so that finding travail in life, we may only rest in death."

Later on, in a prayer to our Lord, he says:

"We deserve nothing without Thee, but we deserve everything in Thee and through Thee."

The prayers are very varied intercessions, acts of love, contrition, prayers for various graces and gifts of the Spirit which are often founded on passages of Holy Scripture.

"Lord," he prays, recalling Ps. xxvii., "Thou art my light, be also my salvation, so that I may listen to Thy words with fear and accomplish them with joy, and that I may adore them at all times with fear and joy, for they are the words of eternal life in which we find Thee."

There are some lovely words of prayer for strength against the world—which have a sad intensity when one remembers how hardly the world bore on Port Royal.

Not less beautiful are the prayers before and after reading Holy Scripture. They bring out what is the motive for all meditation, the hearing of God's voice. There are prayers before and after Holy Communion, full of that sober, that deep, heart-felt, transforming awe and thankfulness and joy which breathe in the poem for the Holy Communion in the *Christian Year*.

The beloved physician who watched by many a holy deathbed evidently experienced the fear of and shrinking from death which come to many. He prays much about death.

"Lord Jesus, Who didst will to die, so that we may never die, but may pass from death to life, remember Thy death in the hour of my death, when I can remember neither myself nor Thee. Let Thy death which takes away the sins of the world defend and protect my death, which is the penalty of sin."

Following this is a meditation on the weapons which enable the Christian to overcome the evil one. It is all so simple, and yet so heart-searching; he too has held up the Way of Perfection, he too longs for growth in holiness.

Hamon has much devotion for the Holy Angels and the Saints, and his devotion is never exaggerated, never jars, never speaks of anything but that fellowship for which we praise God in the Te Deum, but which so many of us forget entirely.

He has several Litanies in honour of particular Saints, and one is devoted to holy widows.

He drew up some rules for a holy life, which are at once simple and profound, and for each day in the week he has drawn up an Eucharistic Litany, founded on extracts from the Fathers, and of course containing aspirations and thanksgivings and acts of adoration very familiar to us of the English Church, through the labour of those great teachers who have brought back to us of modern time treasures contained in ancient collects, liturgies, and homilies.

"Heavenly bread which the Heavenly Father commands for His children, who ought to be heavenly themselves that they may ask it," he says;

for the note of the need of correspondence is struck throughout everything he writes; he is very fond of that aspect of the Eucharist which brings out that it is the "Food of Immortality."

Hamon prays against the besetting sin of so many

"religious," excessive sadness. "Give us the grace to believe that often sadness is no less an error and an illusion than joy may be." There are some beautiful words of prayer written in grief.

Space forbids larger quotations. Hamon is a beautiful example of Port Royal piety—sober, manly, devoted, resigned, and full of love.

Hamon was indeed a stay and support in these sad days. Forbidden to say their Offices aloud, the nuns arranged to say them each by herself in Church, and daily recited the entire Psalter with a special intention for each day.

On Sunday the Intercession was for the whole Church, and for all Kings and Princes: on Monday for the Pope and all Bishops: on Tuesday for the conversion of Jews, Turks, infidels, heretics, and for missionaries: on Wednesday for the faithful, living and departed: on Thursday for their own Community: on Friday for sinners, for the dying, for all afflicted persons: on Saturday for the grace of increased detachment and for the relations of all the Community.

We have a tolerably minute journal of the events of this sad time, the protests which the unhappy Community drew up, the bickerings with the confessor, M. du Saugey, who was not at all an ill-disposed priest, and who must have found his position extremely disagreeable.

At Easter the Community sent an eloquent and touching letter to the Archbishop, pleading for a Communion. With some trouble the letter was conveyed to Paris. The Archbishop replied that he would send some learned and pious divines to interview the Community, and if these persons thought good they might communicate the nuns. There was the usual discussion, and a very cautious answer was sent to the Archbishop, which considerably displeased him; he returned a reply which reached Port Royal on Good Friday, to the effect that they sorely needed humility. During the season of Lent, Mère Agnès aided the Sisters by conducting their meditations, and

on this Good Friday she spoke on the Passion for more than an hour and a half.

We must pass over several months. In July one of the Sisters, Margaret de Sainte Gertrude, fell ill, and, as she was evidently dying, the good M. Hamon begged that the last Sacraments might be administered. In vain. No help from the ministers of the Church could be obtained, and M. Hamon himself and the Community did all they could by their fervent prayers to speed their Sister's soul.

She died, and no Requiem Mass was said.

The Bishop of Alet, who was one of the episcopal friends of Port Royal, wrote to a common friend of his and of Port Royal that each day as he said Mass he offered up thanks for the firmness of the devoted little band.

There was much sickness at Port Royal at that time; the Sisters were strictly confined within their walls, and as they would not give any promise not to communicate with the outside world, their imprisonment was very close. However, in time, in consideration of the great heat, the nuns were allowed to go into their own little garden. Several more Sisters fell ill, and on their death-beds were harassed by exhortations to sign.

After a while the Archbishop said to one of his clergy, M. Hilaire, who was constantly at Port Royal, that he was to tell the Port Royalists from henceforth not to ask for confessors when they were ill, unless indeed they had changed their minds as to the signature.

It was in this year that the Sister Anne Eugénie died, she who had been known in the world as Madame de Saint Ange. She is one of the most beautiful of the Port Royalists. A sweet, gentle, peaceful, elect soul, more tender, more gracious and winning than even some of *les nôtres*.

Madame de Saint Ange was the daughter of the Governor of Nogent-le-Roi, a town near Dreux. She was born at Nogent, and grew up in an atmosphere of affection and of popularity. From her very early years she was deeply religious, one of those who never lose

their baptismal innocence, and who cannot recall the moment when they first realised that they wished to please God. Reading St Theresa not unnaturally made the child long to tread in the great Saint's steps and become a Carmelite nun. But her father wished her to marry, and gave her to M. de St Ange, who held the post of *premier Maître d'Hôtel* at the Court.

Madame de Saint Ange was married at fifteen and began at once a life of devotion and great self-discipline: she inspired Anne of Austria with a great liking for herself, but she seems never to have been at all fascinated by Court gaieties and to have avoided royal favours as much as possible. Her husband's affairs were in confusion, and she prudently retired from the world until they were in some measure restored to order. It was while she was staying with her father that she formed her life-long friendship with M. d'Andilly. He, of course, spoke to her much of St Cyran and of Port Royal, and induced her on her return to Paris to let him introduce her to his renowned sister Mère Angélique, and to M. de St Cyran. At first Mère Angélique treated poor Madame de Saint Ange almost rudely, but only at first. She soon saw the sincerity of the young and beautiful woman and aided her in every way. Indeed, for some years M. d'Andilly placed one of his daughters, Mdlle. de Luzanci, under her care, for the girl could not then make up her mind to become a nun, though in the end she did embrace the Religious Life. St Cyran wrote many letters to Madame de Saint Ange, and her boy was placed in one of the *Petites Écoles*.

Her married life seems to have been very happy, and her husband, of whom we are not told very much, seems to have gladly allowed her to be charitable, and to make her house a place of shelter for those people whose minds were turned towards retirement from the world. D'Andilly's son spent some time with her before he went to Port Royal.

There is a touching story of a village near Saint Ange being devastated with some infectious disease, and

the brave young *châtelaine* refusing to run away. She sent for doctors and remedies and all needful things, and waited until the outbreak had subsided.

M. de Saint Ange was much influenced by his wife, and resolved in 1651 to sell his post at Court and retire to his country home in the manner of Port Royal. Two months after his retirement he died quite suddenly, and this death was a great grief to his still youthful wife. M. d'Andilly, the ever faithful friend, went to see her, under strict commands from Mère Angélique to say nothing about Port Royal. But Madame de Saint Ange herself told M. d'Andilly that she longed to enter the Religious Life at Port Royal but did not see her way to do so. Her boy needed her. But in a very few months the young Saint Ange[1] himself joined the Solitaires, and his mother was now free. With Mdlle. de Luzanci she entered Port Royal, and in two years, after a novitiate marked by the most touching docility, she was professed.

When the evil days of persecution came, Anne Eugénie was exiled to a Convent of the Visitation at Chaillot, a village near Paris.[2]

Here Anne Eugénie met with much kindness, but nothing could induce her to sign. She returned with the others to Port Royal. It could be seen that the Sœur Anne Eugénie's health was rapidly failing, and equally that she was daily growing more simple, more recollected, more truly humble, and silent.

M. de Péréfixe, who had strictly forbidden any communication to be held with the outer world by the unfortunate Community, sent with strange cruelty a letter from poor Madame de Saint Ange's ne'er-do-weel son. She sent an answer through the Archbishop, and very soon afterwards, in September 1667, lay down to die. She was ill for three months, and no word of impatience, no murmur ever escaped her.

[1] He was called d'Espinoy. The eldest son was a *mauvais sujet*, and his wife was not much better.

[2] It was to this Convent that Mademoiselle de la Vallière retired.

She became much worse in December, and the Archbishop sent M. Bail to her; in vain did he torment the dying Sister to yield and sign; he left her at last and returned to Angélique de St Jean, who persuaded him to hear the confessions of the lay Sisters, and then spoke to him in no measured terms of the grief which she and every Sister felt at seeing their dear Anne Eugénie treated in such a way.

M. Bail quite broke down. "Don't distress yourselves, be comforted, she will lose nothing. I am sure of it, if she is so entirely in God, as I think she is—for she is a holy soul, and God will increase His spiritual consolations to make up for those which she does not receive from the Church." This was tolerably plain speaking; it shows that an honest mind could not but see how devoid of ground the charge of heresy was.

Angélique de Saint Jean replied that she had no doubt all would be well with her Sister, but that he (M. Bail) would have to answer to His Lord, as well as to the Archbishop, as to how he had used his powers to bind and loose.

But it was no use, M. Bail went away and left the Sister to die without the last Sacraments.

M. d'Espinoy, the second son, contrived to send a letter begging for his dying mother's blessing, and all he said about himself comforted her greatly, so that, as she said herself, her grief was swallowed up in joy.

The Community gathered round their dying Sister and the prayers were said; she herself praying that if the Peace of the Church were granted, she might be the last to die without the Sacraments. "And indeed," writes the historian, "no one else died until after the Peace of the Church."

A Requiem was said for her at the Church of the Augustines in Paris; M. d'Espinoy arranged it, and the Archbishop himself told the young man that his mother was a saint, and he (the Archbishop) would willingly be in her place.

M. d'Espinoy died in 1679, and was buried near his mother.

During this time Mère Agnès wrote several letters which breathe her usual lofty spirit of resignation and of calm trust. Writing to M. de Sévigné, she says: "What you tell us, that men in depriving us of every spiritual privilege only give us more ways of uniting ourselves to God, is a word of great comfort which is enough to supply all our lackings. I beg you very humbly to pray to God that He will write it on my heart, for we ought not to desire anything save that holy union of our will to His, which implies, as you rightly say, a separation from oneself, which is something I have not yet asked."

She wrote to Antoine Arnauld (for the poor prisoners found means of communicating with their friends) that they had not refused to receive the confessors whom Archbishop de Péréfixe had proposed to send them for Easter, but that she regarded this proposal of his as being to some extent a trap. For if these new arrivals "should exact nothing else but that we should pray God to grant us light when we communicate, that we may know what we should do, I should fear *that* to be a turning from our way; we are not permitted to have any doubt but that we should do well if we remained in the same mind in which we have always been."

She goes on to say that she might just as well pray to be shown whether Catholicism or Calvinism were the best, or if it were a matter of obligation to keep God's Commandments! The Port Royalists were for the most part fully persuaded in their own minds.

Among Mère Agnès's letters there is a most beautiful exhortation to the Community on the spirit in which the command to abstain from saying their Office aloud should be taken. It is too long to quote entirely, but one or two sentences must be given. Agnès says that the Community's voice of praise is hushed; they must adore God in silence; and yet "knowing that humility penetrates to Heaven, we may dare to hope that we

may be admitted even to the throne of God, and may share that great Voice of Thunder from which these holy words re-echo: 'Fear God, ye that are His Saints, and worship the Lord Who has made Heaven and earth, because His Judgment has come.'"

CHAPTER XVI

EVIL DAYS (1664-1669)

M. SINGLIN had been taken away from his little band of devoted friends, and from the souls whom he was guiding, on the 17th of April 1664. He had been exhausted by the fasts and services of Lent, and on the evening of the 16th of April he lay down on his bed, never to rise again. He realised the nature of his illness, but none of those around him seemed to do so. M. du Fossé and M. Fontaine both thought that he was only over-tired. M. du Fossé sat up that night and called M. Fontaine early in the morning of the 17th of April. "About six o'clock," says the faithful Nicholas, "I was supporting him in my arms while he drank some soup, and sucked a slice of orange, when suddenly the housekeeper, who was standing at the foot of the bed, exclaimed: 'The Father is dying!' and at that very moment his pure and holy soul fled."

M. Singlin was, like M. de St Cyran, a great director of souls. He had in abundance the gift of unction, and he was pre-eminently one of the "holy and humble men of heart" who learnt to think nothing of themselves, but only of God. "No one who came to him for spiritual aid ever regretted it," says Nicholas, and in spite of his humility, or rather perhaps because of it, he drew hearts to his, and those who gave him their confidence loved him. We saw how he comforted Mère Angélique in her fears of death. We shall see how wisely and gently he taught the wilful and lovable Madame de Longueville, and her friend, Mademoiselle de Vertus. Their grief at his death, their sense of loss,

were terrible, but in M. de Saci they found a worthy successor, as the great M. le Maître had discovered years before.

M. Singlin was buried in Port Royal de Paris, but, according to the custom, repugnant to our views (and indeed Fontaine owns his dislike to "cette espèce de massacre"), his heart was sent to Port Royal des Champs.

The Community of Port Royal was indeed to be pitied—M. Singlin dead, M. de Saci in hiding, and they themselves waiting for the blow to fall on them.

M. de Sainte Marthe was in correspondence with those poor sufferers, and it is said that hardly any of those who passed away died uncomforted and without the Sacraments. Certainly he managed to visit Port Royal very frequently. There is a beautiful account of Sainte Marthe climbing up into a tree on a cold winter's night, and speaking words of consolation to the little group of nuns gathered beneath.

He was a true guide of souls, although he stoutly denied the possession of any gifts, or any power to "faire goûter les hommes des choses de salut." But no one who was able to write that most tender and touching appeal to the Archbishop, which we have quoted, could have been destitute of gifts and graces, and his letters are deeply spiritual, full of humility, steeped in Holy Scripture. Angélique de St Jean could not endure him, and it is said by Racine that there were two camps, on one side Mère Angélique de St Jean, Christine Briquet, and M. de Saci; on the other the Mère du Fargis, M. de Sainte Marthe and M. Nicole; and, he went on, "M. de Sainte Marthe always gave in." Prayer was Sainte Marthe's chief subject, to make people pray his great desire.

It is a pity that in the two published volumes of his *Letters* the names of his correspondents are not given—as Sainte Beuve says: "Ce qui fait le principal intérêt des correspondances."

We must not forget that it was in Sainte Marthe that Pascal most confided, and this does indeed make us realise how rare and beautiful a soul was his, to whom

Pascal laid bare his conscience in those last moments of his life.

Nothing was more striking in M. de Sainte Marthe than his great inwardness; he writes to one of those whom he directed, that to send her a rule of life would be quite useless, no one could do it for her—"c'est à Dieu qu'il la faut demander."

Of course this, like every other axiom, cannot be pushed to extremes; most of those who have made any progress in spiritual life would testify to the benefit of living by rule; but probably Sainte Marthe knew that the person to whom he was writing was apt to depend on outward helps only, or at any rate, too much. He speaks much of the light of the Holy Spirit given to individual Christians by God, by our Lord who is our Light. "Let us consult Him, and follow Him, and keep ourselves near Him. Let nothing ever separate us from Him, and we shall see in Him everything we should do, infinitely better than, in my opinion, men can give us." Could any Protestant speak more clearly than this man, who was pre-eminently a *confessor?*

Here is a beautiful letter to a young widow—his niece:—

"Remember every day what St Paul still teaches you, that if you would be a Christian widow, you should have no hope, comfort, or support, save in God only. Instead of what you perhaps once hoped to get from a mortal man, if it is true that God has become your All, show the trust you have in Him, by fervent and continual prayers, which will bring to you and your children the grace which is needful for you. You ought to realise that your chief business, and that on which your salvation depends, is the education of these children. God has only granted them to you in order that you may teach them piety by word and example, and so to work that they may abide through all their lives, steadfast in the Faith and in purity of soul and body. And if to this is joined an absolute submission to God, which will make you endure with patience, courage, joy, those crosses which certainly must come, I am certain, I can assure you, you have no need of a cloister in which to work out your salvation. I do not

see how you could enter one, with such a large family on which your mother love obliges you to bestow all your time and cares and labours. It would be difficult for me to believe that in your state of life, God calls you to the Religious Life, for you could not enter it without failing in the most important duty of a Christian mother."

He goes on to say that for a mother to leave her children for the cloister would imply a very extraordinary vocation. It is refreshing to find a Port Royalist attaching real value to home and home duties. Most of our dear friends would have advised her to place all her children in convents and retire to one herself.

Then he warns her against any idea of a second marriage, in rather severe words; hardly any Port Royalist could properly appreciate the married state.

It is perhaps worth noticing some words on prayer in one of the *Défenses de Port Royal.* The Port Royalists were accused of neglect of various devotional exercises, systematic prayer, and so on. The writer says:—

"It is right to prepare oneself for prayer, and to place oneself in the Presence of God, so that one will only think of Him so far as it is possible; it is right to prepare for one's earnest consideration certain truths, so that one's will may be kindled, and one may say with David: *In meditatione mea exardescet ignis;* it is very profitable to have continually in one's mind some good resolution about overcoming the temptations that one meets, about correcting one's faults, and about practising every virtue.

"It is in this sort of exercise that the method of St Charles and of St François de Sâles consists, and this method is good and approved by all."

The Port Royalists distrusted very complicated spiritual exercises, and the kind of spiritual direction which occupied people's minds more in thinking how to pray than in prayer itself was highly distasteful to them.

A great blow was the arrest of M. de Saci, who was concealed, together with his faithful friend Nicholas Fontaine, and M. du Fossé, in a house in an obscure corner of Paris.

Du Fossé says that he thought no one could object to them, "since reading *Baronius* and working at Ecclesiastical History were not exactly the occupations which would either fit them for committing high treason or for becoming important enough to justify a Prince, who was occupied in high and mighty affairs, casting his eyes on them."

The household only consisted of M. de Saci, Fontaine, the two MM. Du Fossé, and someone else of whose identity we are not certain.

Mme. de Longueville was now under M. de Saci's direction, and early in the morning of the 13th or 14th of May 1666,[1] he and Fontaine went out with the intention of walking to the Hôtel de Longueville, and hearing Mass on the way. The carriage of the *Lieutenant Civile* met them, and the two unsuspecting men were pointed out to him. He sent some of his men to follow them, while he himself went on to De Saci's house; Du Fossé, who had just returned to Paris, was a little tired and only just up. To his great surprise, as he was dressing, he heard a great noise in the house, and, opening his door, discovered a number of guards. Du Fossé was not a little taken aback to find himself in the presence of the *Lieutenant* and various other official people, who stationed guards at all the doors, arrested Du Fossé's brother, and proceeded with much politeness to draw up a report. The *Lieutenant* questioned Du Fossé on all sorts of small details, about visits he had made, about the friends he had seen (nothing could disabuse the authorities of the idea that Port Royal was the centre of a serious conspiracy, an ecclesiastical *fronde*). The *Lieutenant* was irritated to find that he could discover nothing at all incriminating, and in a fit of impatience asked Du Fossé why on earth he led this kind of life; why didn't he purchase an

[1] M. de St Cyran had been arrested on 13th May 1638.

appointment and marry and settle down? Du Fossé replied, "everyone to his taste," and that *he*, at any rate, felt that the persecution of friends was an additional reason for living with them.

He was a chivalrous person, and possessed a gallant spirit which resented the petty espionage, this absurd persecution of people of the calibre of De Saci and Antoine Arnauld. The *Lieutenant* and Du Fossé went into the latter's study, and Du Fossé, while the magistrate was admiring the view, slipped into his pocket a copy of the *Provincial Letters*, which, he observed, M. le Lieutenant would certainly have confiscated as profitable for himself, but very bad for Du Fossé.

Nothing incriminating was found among Du Fossé's papers or in the rooms of his brother—a boy fresh from college, and not at all versed in controversy. Just as Du Fossé was congratulating himself that it was all over and that De Saci and Fontaine were well out of it, up drew a carriage, and out of it emerged both these luckless people. It appears that the officers sent by the *Lieutenant* had caught up De Saci and Fontaine in a quiet street, and had taken them to a house of a legal functionary. They had been looking at the walls of the Bastille and compassionating one of the inmates who was known to them, when they were arrested. De Saci's chief regret was that he had left behind him his little copy of St Paul's Epistles, which he always carried about with him, but which on this fatal morning he had left at home.

After some weary hours of waiting they were taken back to De Saci's house, where De Saci underwent a long interrogation. Letters addressed to various people were in his pockets, and his MS. translation of the New Testament. "Who are these people?" asked the magistrate. "Oh, they are all for me," replied De Saci. "Cela sent bien la cabale," said M. le Lieutenant. "Cela sent la précaution," replied De Saci, who, during all the weary hours of questioning was calm, courageous, and silent as to his correspondents' identity.

The *Lieutenant* went to St Germain and handed in his report to the King, who was pleased to say that M. de Saci was undoubtedly a man of virtue and of intelligence, but nevertheless was also pleased to shut up this virtuous person in the Bastille for two years.

For nearly a fortnight these unfortunate people remained prisoners in this house, and then three carriages arrived, escorted by soldiers and officers, and orders were given that De Saci, Fontaine, and Du Fossé and his young brother were all to prepare to go to the Bastille. Even in France under Louis XIV., this must have seemed a somewhat arbitrary proceeding. Naturally, as the procession of carriages, escorted by such an array of armed men, proceeded along the streets, the prisoners were supposed to be notorious malefactors—coiners, for instance. They were all lodged separately, but Mme. de Pomponne, M. d'Andilly's excellent daughter-in-law, took possession of the house they had left. M. de Pomponne had indeed invited Du Fossé to go with him to Sweden, to which country he had been appointed Ambassador.

Du Fossé spent, as he says, some miserable days, solaced a little by the friend whose fate Fontaine and M. de Saci had been bewailing when they were themselves arrested, the Sieur Savreux.

For three miserable weeks, Du Fossé, his brother, and a friend of theirs who had been arrested with them, were kept in the Bastille, and it was only through the exertions of Mme. du Fossé that they were released, on the condition that they should go to Normandy and not return to Paris without permission. Such was the tyranny so dear to Louis XIV.

Du Fossé did retire to his home in Normandy, and then paid a visit to the Bishop of Angers, of whom he gives a most pleasing description. He also says much of his love for his Norman peasants at Le Fossé—how affectionate and generous they were. Fontaine was left in the Bastille, and by no means wished to be released if freedom meant separation from M. de Saci. His own desire and prayer was to be allowed to occupy

the same rooms as his master; and not a little to his surprise this request was granted. One day the poor youth was feeling ill and unhappy; he was suddenly told to pack up his few possessions, and was abruptly introduced into the apartment of M. de Saci, who was not the least prepared for such a solace. The prisoners embraced with effusion, and the official who had conducted Nicholas was quite overcome by their joy. He begged them to finish their dinner, which both had begun when they were interrupted in their respective rooms. As soon as he left them, the friends flung themselves on their knees in one burst of thankfulness, and each month as the day of their reunion came round, they made a special act of thanksgiving, repeating certain psalms which M. de Saci chose. They also kept the day of their arrest.

For a whole week they observed a sort of retreat of thankfulness, and then began a life of work and of prayer, broken by short intervals for air and exercise, during which the Governor of the Bastille endeavoured to trap M. de Saci into some dangerous expression of opinion which might be reported against him. It is hardly needful to say that these efforts were fruitless. In a mocking spirit he tried to persuade De Saci to make some effort to be released. "Don't you remember," said he, "the text: 'Help yourself and Heaven will help you,'" which text, Fontaine remarks, was left out of the translation of the New Testament on which M. de Saci had been engaged so long. They were both allowed to be present daily at Mass, but were never allowed to make their Communion, a most tyrannous prohibition.

The great work of M. de Saci was this translation. The New Testament had been begun in 1657, and he, Nicole, and Antoine Arnauld had worked at it together; it was finished before De Saci's arrest. During his imprisonment he worked at the Old Testament, and he finished his work on the day before his release.

The New Testament was published at Amsterdam, and, as was natural, was much denounced on its first

appearance; yet, after the Peace of the Church, it was submitted, together with Arnauld and Nicole's book entitled *La Perpétuité de la Foi*, to the judgment of Bossuet, and won some approval from him. His criticism on the translation was that the Holy Scriptures had been put into rather ultra fine language. The translators were quite willing to submit to criticism from Bossuet, and meetings were held at the house of Madame de Longueville. All was broken off, however, as we shall see later, by her death. We feel that the translation is not adequate. Take two examples: "Or la foi est le fondement des choses que l'on espère et une preuve certaine de ce qui ne se voit point." "Il y a plusieurs demeures dans la maison de mon Père." To those who have been steeped in the Vulgate or the English Authorized Version, De Saci's translation does not appeal.

The translators used the Vulgate, comparing it with the Greek text, and translated from the Greek where it does not agree with the Vulgate.

There is a most interesting Preface to the edition published in 1669, which begins: "It is so essential and right that all Christians should have love and reverence for the New Testament, that these feelings can never be obliterated unless Christians should forget the Name they bear . . ." There is a beautiful passage on the Eucharist and the Word of God being alike the Food of the Soul.

The Old Testament was published in parts; it is a translation from the Vulgate, and it is true, as far as we can judge, that in the Old Testament De Saci had a task rather beyond his powers. Bossuet would have done it better.

Returning to the prison life—now and then some gleams of pleasure were afforded them. Fontaine wrote a charming description of their life to the physician Hamon, in which he says:—

"If you ever knew how one day was spent, you know how all pass. The day is divided between prayer and study, from beginning to end, and there is nothing

deathlike or feeble in these absolutely inward and spiritual exercises . . . although we are all day together, we say very little; we both have the same love of silence, we both feel it to be necessary so that we may enjoy peace and lose none of its fruits. From four or five in the morning until noon, we very often do not speak two sentences. In the afternoon we converse about our friends and then read some passage of the Bible, which keeps us about half an hour, and we relapse into absolute silence until we rise from our evening meal, and then we do much the same as in the afternoon until Compline.

"Hérissant" (M. de Saci's faithful servant) "is in the anteroom as silent as we, working away at his miniature. And thus we three spend our days in perfect harmony, no annoyances, or tempers, or 'ennui.' . . .

"And besides, I wish you could be present at our innocent little concerts. Hardly a day goes by without our chanting some hymn or canticle. . . . We spend the hours of conversation in talks about each of our friends, each comes before us in turn; and we are compelled by our state of life to die to present things; we revive the memory of past days. . . . We are certain that if the pity of men delivers us not from prison, death at least will set us free."

The Peace of the Church was concluded in 1669 and De Saci and Fontaine were released.

But we must retrace our steps a little, in order to see how this event was accomplished.

CHAPTER XVII

THE PEACE OF THE CHURCH (1669)

As we have seen, in an evil hour Pope Innocent X. had issued the Bull concerning the famous Five Propositions, and we have followed the sad story of persecution, of attempts at compromise, of explanations, of distinctions between "foi humaine" and "foi divine," and between "fait" and "droit."

In 1665 Louis XIV. was moved to request a fresh Papal intervention. The Episcopal opinion in France was by no means unanimous; a fresh Bull was needed.

The then reigning Pope, Alexander VII., as Cardinal Chigi, had taken a very active part in inducing Innocent X. to issue the unhappy Bull of 1653, and he was delighted to please the eldest son of the Church, Louis XIV., and to gratify his own predilections.

Rumours of course were rife in France before the arrival of the Bull, and Nicole, the friend of Antoine Arnauld, wrote a bold letter (needless to say not under his own name) in which he sets forth the following propositions:—

1. That to be excommunicated unjustly in no way injures the excommunicated person, who is not really separated from the Church.

2. It is possible to remain in real communion with the Church, even though one be unjustly excommunicated.

3. This unjust excommunication is a species of martyrdom acceptable to God.

4. Nothing must be done in the shape of forcing one's conscience to avoid excommunication.

Nicole had been busy for some time in writing and publishing letters *Sur l'Hérésie Imaginaire* under the name of Sieur de Damvilliers, and also *Lettres Visionnaires*, which were partly in answer to an attack on Nicole and Sainte Marthe's *Apologie pour les Religieuses de Port Royal.*

On the 15th of February 1665 the Bull was published. All ecclesiastics, religious of both sexes, and schoolmasters were obliged to sign the formulary.

We have seen the misery which had come on Port Royal, and in 1666 it would seem that the darkest hour had now fallen on them. Arnauld and M. de Sainte Marthe and Nicole were in hiding, M. de Saci was in the Bastille, and a handful of holy and devoted women were confined in their own Convent, and in life and in death were deprived of the Sacraments.

And against the powers of this world four Bishops alone stood out, and dared the Pope and the King and the Order of Jesus. These four Bishops were Nicolas Pavillon, Bishop of Alet, Henry Arnauld, Bishop of Angers, Nicolas Choart de Buzanval, Bishop of Beauvais, Etienne François de Caulet, Bishop of Pamiers. These, who are perhaps not unlike our Seven Bishops, have had their lives recorded in a volume entitled *Vies des quatre Evêques;* they are a noble little band.

Of these, the strongest and most remarkable was Nicolas Pavillon, who, apart from his connection with Port Royal, well deserves to be remembered as the very model of a true pastor, a veritable follower of the *Pastor Pastorum.*

It is remarkable that, different as the four Bishops were in character and in rank, they were conspicuously alike in holiness of life, in self-denial, in devotion to their work, and in absolute disregard of Court favour.

Of these four Bishops, M. d'Alet stood out as the conspicuous champion of the rights and prerogatives of

the Episcopate as against the Papacy, rights and prerogatives which, as it seems to us, are too often set aside by the excessive ultramontanism of the Western Church.

In the first beginning of the trouble concerning the signature of the Formulary, he resented the decision compelling Bishops to sign the Formulary, and declared, with a boldness which must have surprised Louis XIV., that the King himself could not give to an uncanonical assembly any right to make such laws.

M. d'Alet wrote a respectful remonstrance to the King, and prohibited any signing of the Formulary in his diocese. He was thereby thrown into direct connection with Port Royal. The second Bull of 1665 of Alexander VII. drew from him a charge (*Mandement*) which was much read and discussed. In fact, the whole French Church were anxiously considering what he would say. "Il y a des moments ou la conscience publique aime à se personifier dans un homme, elle s'en fait un oracle."[1]

The three other Bishops followed his example, and the King solicited from Rome a command to these prelates to retract their charges and also powers to create a commission to try them for recalcitrancy.

This proceeding was by no means approved of by Louis's Ministers. Colbert, his Minister of Finance, and Le Tellier, the Chancellor, thought it by no means judicious to give Rome too much power to interfere in the private affairs of the Kingdom of France.

There was a feeling amongst various people at the time that if M. d'Alet paid a visit to the Court, the affair might be arranged. But wiser counsels prevailed. The great friend of Mme. de Longueville, Mademoiselle de Vertus (both these great ladies were much mixed up with the controversy of the day) wrote, "We do not belong to the age when God sent prophets to kings, whom they found in private without difficulty."

Pope Alexander VII. willingly published a Bull appointing a commission of Bishops to judge the four

[1] Sainte Beuve.

recalcitrant prelates; but before anything could be done, the Pope died, and was succeeded by Cardinal Rospigliosi, under the title of Clement IX. The new Pope was said to be of very pacific disposition: the opportunity was felt by all to be great. A letter was drawn up on the subject, and signed by nineteen Bishops, vindicating the incriminated four, and beseeching the Holy Father to give peace to the disturbed Church.

But the person who did most to bring about the peace of the Church was Madame de Longueville, who had been under the spiritual direction of the Port Royal divines since 1661, and who had sheltered Antoine Arnauld and Nicole and others in her *hôtel*. She, the sister of the great Condé, a princess of the blood Royal of France, who had found rest for her troubled soul, through the teaching of M. Singlin and M. de Saci, flung herself into the cause and wrote an eloquent and touching letter to the Pope. Her house was the accredited meeting-place of the party, and she describes that party in epigrammatic terms; probably both Arnauld and Nicole had their share in formulating that letter.

The negotiations of this Peace dragged on rather wearily, and were very complicated. The King was not at all pleased when he first heard of the nineteen Bishops; but things were beginning to interest him other than persecuting helpless women and learned scholars; Antoine Arnauld, hitherto so impracticable, was tamed and reduced to reason. The chief person who now made difficulties was M. d'Alet. He listened to all advances, which were made chiefly by the Archbishop of Sens, but he took great care to make no terms unless these terms should expressly include the Port Royalist nuns. These poor people were not ungrateful; and indeed it is a beautiful bit of Christian chivalry on his part, this espousal of the unpopular party, whom he only knew by name.

However, Antoine Arnauld and the other Bishops drew up a letter. M. de Comminges, who had tried before to effect a compromise, and M. de Pamiers, went to

Alet and persuaded the Bishop to sign. The Papal Nuncio had an audience of the Pope, and at last peace was obtained. The four Bishops, the Port Royalists, all agreed to sign the Formulary, with a clear distinction between "droit" and "fait."

A letter signed by the four Bishops was also sent to the Pope. A *procès-verbal* containing an account of a synod convoked by each Bishop for obtaining signatures, and a certificate signed by Arnauld and M. de Châlons were at length sent to Rome, and the Brief proclaiming the Peace of the Church was issued in October 1668.

M. de Sens, who had worked so bravely to bring it about, just then fell into disgrace; but, as his last piece of work before retiring to his diocese (the refuge of Bishops who fell into Louis XIV.'s disfavour), he contrived to present Antoine Arnauld to the Papal Nuncio, who was excessively polite. The King heard of this visit, and commanded Arnauld to present himself at Court.

M. de Pomponne, Arnauld's nephew, then in the full tide of Court favour, presented his uncle at St Germain, and everything went off with perfect smoothness. Antoine Arnauld made an excellent little speech, and the King was quite gracious, observing that, now all the disputes were to be put away, "il n'en faut plus parler."

But the extraordinary feature of this pacification is, that once it was obtained, the so-called Jansenist heresy vanished. For a time what had been termed obstinacy was now termed constancy, and imprisonment and flight were distinguishing and honourable marks of service in a good cause.

The Jesuits were not pleased, and the Papal Nuncio had to bear being told by Père Annat that the work of twenty years had been undone in a quarter of an hour.

One can only wonder why this Peace could not have been brought about sooner. No doubt, humanly speaking, it was the attitude of the Bishops and the intervention of Madame de Longueville, that brought about the new Pope's willingness to gratify the Church.

But as Arnauld and the unfortunate Sisters at Port Royal yielded now, it seems as if they might as well have done so some years before when M. de Comminges made his fruitless attempt.

M. de Saci was released; to M. de Pomponne was allowed the pleasure of conducting his holy and much enduring cousin, and Nicholas Fontaine, out of their prison. M. de Saci had been deprived of Holy Communion for two and a half years; now the Archbishop received him kindly and presented him a few days later at Court. It may be well imagined that Madame de Longueville and Mademoiselle de Vertus were rejoiced to welcome their spiritual father.

And Port Royal. As soon as rumours of peace reached the devoted band, the nuns met in Chapter, and agreed to pray much, and to be very careful as to signing anything fresh. Indeed, they said that after all there was a hollowness about this Peace; it is true that it was due only to the fact that Louis XIV. was not yet strong enough to put down the Port Royalists. Thirty years later, things were very different.

The poor Sisters had already been considering the project set on foot by Madame de Longueville to transfer their Community into the Diocese of Sens. The Archbishop was favourable to the idea, but there were great difficulties in the way—questions of money, questions of divisions of property; and in the middle of these discussions came the proposed Peace. There were many searchings of heart; the idea of signing was repugnant to this band of poor women, who had suffered so much.

Arnauld wrote a very long letter setting forth to the Community the reasons why they should now sign. We do not wonder that the devoted Community hesitated. If they were to sign now, why should they not have done so long before? Angélique de St Jean resisted as long as she could, and wrote letters to her uncle in a lofty and religious tone, but she and the rest were at length won over.

The Archbishop of Paris at first hesitated, and paid

no attention to letters written by Mère Agnès praying that the Community might be restored to their rights and privileges. But the Pope had issued his Bull; it was necessary to do something, and at last a wordy submission was signed by the Sisters.

The Archbishop seemed quite overjoyed by this declaration, and sent one of his Clergy to Port Royal on the 15th of February 1669. He preached a sermon to the poor nuns, and then read a Charge from the Archbishop to the effect that the Community might be restored to the visible Communion of the Church and also to the exercise of their right as a Community. Then came another discourse, after which a Te Deum was sung, and the nuns made their confessions to another priest who was present; the next day came High Mass and the withdrawal of the guard. What must have been the feelings of the little band, restored to outward fellowship, absolved again, free to kneel and receive the Bread of Life! Antoine Arnauld came to Port Royal in a few days and celebrated the Divine Mysteries.

A new question now arose—Was Port Royal des Champs to be united again to Port Royal de Paris?

It was decided in the negative, and Port Royal de Paris became a separate Community, retaining a large portion of property and relinquishing the right of electing its own Abbess. Port Royal des Champs, on the other hand, retained the right to elect its Superiors triennially. The affair of separation was decided in May 1669, and Antoine Arnauld wrote to Pascal's sister, Madame Périer: "La tranquillité de nos bonnes sœurs dans tout cela [the division of the property] est admirable. Ce doit être la plus grande consolation de leurs amis." Arnauld also wrote a very long and rather dry letter to the Sisters on the duty of thankfulness.

For ten years Port Royal des Champs flourished.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE GREAT LADIES OF PORT ROYAL

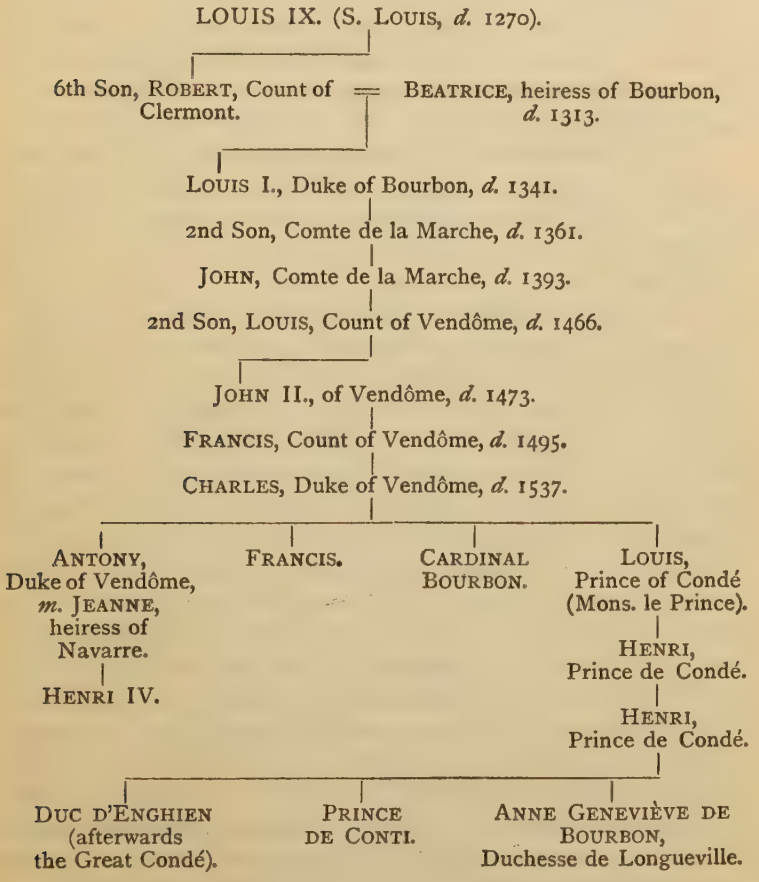
Port Royal and all for which it stood had an irresistible attraction for many great souls, both men and women. Of the group of noble women who came more or less under the teaching and influence of Port Royal, none seems to us so extraordinarily fascinating as Geneviève de Bourbon, Duchesse de Longueville. She lives still in the pages of M. Cousin's two delightful studies of her life; she looks out on us from her portrait in Versailles; and after all these years she seems to inspire those who read her story, so romantic, so heartrending, so penitential, with the ardent affection which she could so fully arouse in her contemporaries, in those who came under her spell.

She was the daughter of Henri II. de Bourbon, Prince de Condé, of the Blood Royal of France. It will be convenient to give the descent of the Condé family (see opposite page).

The third Prince of Condé, Anne's father, married Charlotte de Montmorency, one of the most strikingly beautiful women of the time and a granddaughter of Anne de Montmorency, Constable of France in the unhappy wars of Religion, himself a veritable type of the brutal devotee of the Catholic party. Of the Princesse de Condé, Madame de Motteville wrote: "Parmi les Princesses celle qui en était la première, avait aussi le plus en beauté"; this was written some years after Anne de Bourbon's birth, and when the Princesse de Condé was no longer young.

Charlotte de Montmorency had trodden a thorny

path. When she was a mere child she had the misfortune to inspire the susceptible heart of Henry IV. with a most violent passion. He married her to the Prince de Condé his cousin, whom he was accustomed to call his nephew, and then, with his usual disregard of morality and decency, paid the bride the most


LOUIS IX. (S. LOUIS, d. 1270).
6th Son, ROBERT, Count of Clermont.
BEATRICE, heiress of Bourbon, d. 1313.
LOUIS I., Duke of Bourbon, d. 1341.
2nd Son, Comte de la Marche, d. 1361.
JOHN, Comte de la Marche, d. 1393.
2nd Son, LOUIS, Count of Vendôme, d. 1466.
JOHN II., of Vendôme, d. 1473.
FRANCIS, Count of Vendôme, d. 1495.
CHARLES, Duke of Vendôme, d. 1537.
ANTONY, Duke of Vendôme, m. JEANNE, heiress of Navarre.
HENRI IV.
FRANCIS.
CARDINAL BOURBON.
LOUIS, Prince of Condé (Mons. le Prince).
HENRI, Prince de Condé.
HENRI, Prince de Condé.
DUC D'ENGHIEN (afterwards the Great Condé).
PRINCE DE CONTI.
ANNE GENEVIÈVE DE BOURBON, Duchesse de Longueville.

compromising attentions. The Prince de Condé, an unattractive person—"jeune homme sans jeunesse—" grew very jealous, the Queen Marie de Medicis was told by her wretched favourites, the Concini man and wife, that Henry wished to poison her, and Henry conducted

himself more like a foolish boy of twenty than a renowned monarch of fifty-five years. He twice visited the Princesse in disguise. Condé carried his wife off to Belgium, and proclaimed himself heir to the crown, visiting Spain and endeavouring to stir up Philip III.; and "il s'imaginait jouer un grand rôle politique."[1]

Henry IV. prepared for war, but his assassination stopped this and all his great plans for the benefit of France. The country has had few greater misfortunes; "La main d'un misérable insensé avait fait rétrograder pour des siècles les destins de la France," says Martin.

This is somewhat of a digression; but we see how conspiracy, and intrigue, and politics—of a kind—filled the life of Mlle. de Bourbon's parents, and it is not strange that she should have thrown herself into the whirlpool.

Condé returned from his exile, and some years later became an important personage; but the Concini, the Queen Regent's favourites, trembling not only for their positions but even for their lives, contrived to arrest him and to confine him in the Bastille and subsequently in the Bois de Vincennes. Here was born Anne de Bourbon; a few months after her birth the Prince was set at liberty, and the Hôtel de Condé became a centre of society. The Duc d'Enghien, Louis de Bourbon, to be known in later years as the Great Condé, was born in 1619; the second son, Prince de Conti, was born in 1629; the brothers from their childhood had the most romantic affection for their beautiful sister. The Prince de Conti was especially under her influence.

Anne de Bourbon grew up in the midst of the brilliant society which M. Cousin has so well described —witty, yet serious: on the one hand fighting duels and engaging in romantic adventures, on the other discussing the deep problems of religion and the literary questions of the day. It was the age of great causes, great reforms in the Church, the age of great men and women. The religious spirit was reviving; and after the anarchy of the Religious Wars and the

[1] Henri Martin.

not very devout or cultured atmosphere of the Court of Henri IV., it was with relief that the devout and holy souls who have been the glory of the French Church in every century, and never more so than at this time, turned for refuge to holy retreats, to works of piety, to devout contemplation. The century was the age of violent contrasts, of sudden reversals. To be taken from a palace to a prison, and thence to a scaffold, was no uncommon fate.

Mademoiselle de Bourbon's childhood was overshadowed by the deaths of two members of her mother's house, who both perished on the scaffold.

Montmorency Bouteville was beheaded because he had fought a duel. Richelieu had issued stern edicts against the practice of duelling. The Duc de Montmorency also fell a victim to Richelieu and was beheaded after vainly trying to raise a rebellion in Languedoc in 1630. His widow entered Religion, and we shall find her later on aiding her niece to find pardon and peace.

This terrible execution, against which most of the great ones of the Court, headed by the Princesse de Condé, had vainly pleaded, was an example of the frightful mercilessness of the minister.[1] It caused the deepest grief to the victim's sister, who became a *dévote* and was drawn to the Carmelite nuns; Mademoiselle de Bourbon often accompanied her mother on her visits to the Convent, and made many friends among the *religieuses*, who were mostly women of high birth, and were many of them remarkable for mental gifts. Anne of Austria in her unhappy days had often sought a refuge in this Convent, as, indeed, the Superior realised to her cost when she was confronted with the terrible Richelieu and taxed with aiding the correspondence of the Queen with Spain.

[1] Montmorency's death made a most profound impression. "Personne ne pouvait s'habituer à l'idée que cet homme si beau, si brillant, et si brave, héritier du plus grand nom de France, allié à toutes les maisons souveraines de l'Europe, allait mourir d'une mort infâme." H. Martin, *Histoire de France.*

The Carmelites had Spanish affinities, for their French foundress had sent for Spanish nuns, disciples of St Theresa, who herself had reformed the order in Spain.

The house of Longueville, into which Mademoiselle de Bourbon was to marry, had sent two benefactresses to the Convent.

M. Cousin, in his delightful book, *La Jeunesse de Madame de Longueville*, gives us interesting biographies of the Carmelites. Of the first Prioress, Mère Madeleine de St Joseph, it was said—"She did not tread the way of perfection, she ran along it." "When she was Prioress, the convent was like Paradise, so much fervour and longing for perfection were to be seen," says another *religieuse*.

The Princesse de Condé and her daughter had their own rooms at the Convent; they made many presents and were both admitted to the privileges of foundresses and benefactresses, "that is to say, the freedom of entrance into the convent at any time they pleased." Of the Princesse de Condé we read that "she was to be seen in the choir at every office, in the refectory observing the ordinary self-denial, and laying down her earthly rank at the feet of the spouses of Christ."

This description gives us a picture of very real, heartfelt devotion, by no means uncommon among the great ladies of the seventeenth century.

Mademoiselle de Bourbon was thus from her childhood surrounded by an atmosphere of religion. But religion, as presented by the Carmelite nuns, was somewhat gloomy. Faber says: "There are two ways in which the world may be regarded by holy persons: one that the world is altogether bad—'a perpetual partial eclipse of God'—and the other that all creation is lying before them with the lustre of God's benediction upon it."

There is no doubt as to which way the Carmelites for the most part looked at the world, and the young, ardent, beautiful Anne shrank from it with great fear. So many of her convent friends recounted that in their

own experiences it was a world beset with snares, encompassed by sorrow, and peopled with men and women of doubtful characters and seducing manners. Poor Madame la Princesse had experienced temptations and sorrows in great abundance, and had realised the changes and chances of this life quite sufficiently to make her not unwilling to yield to Anne's wishes. M. le Prince, however, had other views, and was not at all disposed to give up his beautiful and only daughter to the strictest and most ascetic Order of nuns. Mademoiselle de Bourbon made her entry in the great world, shrinking at first, and then by slow degrees yielding to all the allurements and some of the temptations of the wicked and delightful world.

She was surrounded by the most fascinating and witty society—the Hôtel de Rambouillet, the great Corneille, Voiture (a poet of no very great merit who celebrated Mme. de Longueville in prose and verse), Madame de Sablé, herself to become one of the friends of Port Royal, the good and gracious Jeanne de Schomberg (Duchesse de Liancourt), and many more. And there were summer excursions to Fontainebleau and to Chantilly, which had been granted to the Princesse de Condé after the death of the Duc de Montmorency.

Life at Chantilly was extremely gay, amusing, and interesting. Anne de Bourbon was beautiful, with golden hair and deep-blue eyes, and possessed the gift of fascination. She could and did inspire the deepest affection. The story of the affection felt for her by the authors of *Le Grand Cyrus*, Mademoiselle Scudéry and her brother George, is a delightful example of disinterested affection and chivalrous devotion. The brother and sister were not in the least attached to the Fronde, with which Madame de Longueville was to be identified; they had every reason to fear the displeasure of the Court; and yet volume after volume of *Le Grand Cyrus* as it came out was dedicated to Anne de Bourbon. Whatever the literary faults of either the brother or sister, they were incomparable as friends, and their

devotion was fully appreciated by Madame de Longueville.

The young Duc d'Enghien's unhappy love affairs possibly clouded this time for his sister. He had fallen in love with Mademoiselle du Vigean, and there seemed no particular reason why he should not marry her. Although the Vigean family were not precisely the equals of the Condés, still there would have been no great *mésalliance*, and the young girl Marthe du Vigean was beautiful and good, and a great friend of Anne de Bourbon. But the young Duc d'Enghien was forced to marry Mademoiselle de Brégé, Cardinal Richelieu's niece; he fell ill in consequence, recovering in time to go on a campaign. Mademoiselle du Vigean was his first and only love.

No shadow of blame fell on the gentle and beautiful Marthe du Vigean, but the Duc made fierce and fruitless attempts to break through his marriage; the situation was impossible for her, and she retired to the Carmelites, and, it is to be believed, found comfort and peace.

The Duc d'Enghien had been forced into a loveless, detested marriage. His sister's time had now come. Her parents, "not being able to discover in all France a nobleman who could be called young, and to whom policy could allow them to give Mademoiselle de Bourbon, proposed to her the greatest nobleman in France, next in rank to the princes of the blood, the Duc de Longueville." This person was at this period forty seven years of age, a widower, and also attached to the notorious Madame de Montbazon.

Dislike on the part of Mademoiselle de Bourbon was unheeded. M. de Longueville "était vieux et elle était jeune et belle comme une ange," said "La grande Mademoiselle." On the 2nd of June 1642, she was married, and to all appearances she was as radiantly happy, as she was dazzlingly beautiful. Probably M. de Longueville did not consider himself as being in a state of decrepitude. He was brave and honourable, not very clever, and extremely impulsive. He was not

made for great positions, or for perilous enterprises, and an evil star seemed to compel him to be playing incessantly, and by no fault of his own, a part in adventures for which he had neither inclination nor capacity. He was not a man of spotless reputation, and numerous quarrels ensued between himself and his mother-in-law, the Princesse de Condé.

Madame de Longueville had her own circle of admirers, of would-be lovers, and the impressions made on her by the Carmelites seemed to have been destroyed by the world—only for a time, however.

A miserable episode happened soon after her marriage. Among her circle of adorers was Coligny,[1] a handsome boy, son of M. de Chatillon. A silly trick played by Madame de Montbazon on the young Duchesse enraged Coligny, who, unable to challenge the real offender, fell on M. le Duc de Guise, whose dislike for the name of Longueville was well known. The poor boy was killed in a duel fought in the Palais Royal, and the whole melancholy story was set forth in a novel written immediately afterwards. Also ribald songs were made by the Parisians on Madame de Longueville; for the secret history of the duel was well known.

"On ne badine pas avec l'amour." We come to the years of Anne de Bourbon's life on which those who love her would rather not dwell, and for which she repented deeply and truly.

Madame de Longueville went with her husband to Madgeburg, where he was negotiating, or trying to negotiate, the peace of Westphalia; but he was little more than a figure-head, and the Princesse left him and returned to her mother in Paris, where her eldest son was born. Her younger brother, the Prince de Conti, was much with her, and for his brilliant sister Conti had a passionate admiration; he was her slave.

For a time life went on in all the gaiety and brilliancy of former years, and in 1649 the fatal temptation of her life came to Madame de Longueville.

[1] Of the family of the Admiral Coligny who perished at the Bartholomew.

François, Prince de Marsillac (b. 1613), who on the death of his father became the Duc de La Rochefoucauld, by which name he is best known, had married early and had served in various campaigns. He was tall, almost handsome, possessed of perfect manners and of complete selfishness, of self-love and of self-knowledge which amounted to genius. If an enemy had written of M. de La Rochefoucauld what he himself has told us concerning his reasons for making love to Madame de Longueville, we should simply refuse to believe it; but as he himself calmly states that it was in order to excite her, and through her, her brothers, to an active rebellion against Mazarin, we are forced to suppose that he is speaking the truth.

Little by little M. de La Rochefoucauld subdued the lofty and ambitious soul, and dazzled her by pointing out to her that a new part was open to her. She had been the centre of an adoring and loving circle of friends, now she could become a leader of men and could play a great part in politics. Long years afterwards Madame de Longueville confessed to M. Singlin that her great fault was pride, that she longed to be first, to be distinguished. But whatever her faults may have been, selfishness was not among them. For her false and selfish lover she sacrificed herself and all she possessed again and again. How did M. de La Rochefoucauld repay this self-devotion?

"Cette princesse avait tous les avantages de l'esprit et de la beauté en si haut point et avec tant d'agrément qu'il semblait que la nature avait pris plaisir de former un ouvrage parfait, et achevé. Mais ses belles qualités étaient moins brillantes à cause d'une tache qui ne s'est jamais vue en une princesse de ce mérite, qui est que, bien loin de donner la loi à ceux qui avaient une particulière attraction pour elle, elle se transformait si fort dans leurs sentiments qu'elle ne reconnaissait point les siens propres!"

Thus he writes of the woman who had given him her heart.

Madame de Nemours, Madame de Longueville's

step-daughter, observes in her Memoirs that it was not a little surprising to see Madame de Longueville one of the first to join the party of non-contents. She had nothing to hope from them, and from the Court she had received nothing but kindness. It was La Rochefoucauld who inspired her with these vain and foolish ambitions. He had boundless influence over her, and as he thought of no one but himself, he made her throw herself into intrigues which ruined her.

Madame de Motteville observes that "Ce seigneur (de La Rochefoucauld) qui était plus intéressé qu'il n'était tendre, voulant s'agrandir par elle, crût lui devoir inspirer le désir de gouverner les princes ses frères."

But Retz really sums up the case—

"Comme sa passion l'obligea de ne mettre la politique qu'en second dans sa conduite, de l'héroïne d'un grand parti, elle en devint l'aventurière."

And this infatuation made her throw herself into the arms of the very persons who so lately had sullied her fair fame—into the Guise and Vendôme factions. Into the history of the Fronde we must not enter. M. Cousin's admirable life of *Madame de Longueville pendant la Fronde* and Mrs Cock's interesting life of *Madame de Longueville* can be read by any who wish to follow her sad story. It suffices to say here that on the final break-up of the Fronde party, Madame de Longueville, deserted by La Rochefoucauld, separated from her husband and her children, on bad terms with her much-loved younger brother, and in great grief on account of the exile of the Great Condé, was reduced to as great a depth of extreme misery as she had at one time been raised to the height of human prosperity.

She had been virtually alone in Guienne carrying on the war for Condé, and when at last a treaty was drawn up, by which peace was restored to the unfortunate province, Madame de Longueville retired to one of her husband's houses in Anjou, and then paid a long visit to her aunt, the Duchesse de Montmorency, widow of

Henri de Montmorency, whose tragic death had overshadowed Anne de Bourbon's early girlhood. Madame de Montmorency had retired to the Convent of Sainte Marie at Moulins, and was now Superior. It was here that the early impressions received in the Carmelite house at Paris were revived; the good seed so checked by the thorns of the world sprang up again.

As in the case of another illustrious penitent, it was on reading the Epistles of St Paul that light came to her sad soul. She said herself: "A curtain seemed to fall from before her eyes, and she seemed to awaken to realities—to see life as it really was." It was a very real Via Dolorosa; she had not yet found a guide for her weary soul, and she was sorely tried by outward circumstances. She was obliged to spend some time in Paris, and to hear Condé proclaimed guilty of treason. She had humbled herself before her husband and was reconciled to him. She had entered again into relations with her Carmelite friends and wrote to one of them, probably Mademoiselle du Vigean, that nothing would have been to her such happiness as to have been allowed to spend her days with the Carmelites. "But after having left God of my own free will, it would not be right that I should find Him in the very first moments of seeking: if only at the end of my life I find I am not separated from Him, it would be very much for me," she goes on to say in that deep humility which gives to her the wonderful attraction which she possesses. She wrote a great deal to her aunt at Moulins; and her friendship with Madame de Sablé was to bring her great blessings.

In 1654 the Prince de Conti was married to Anne Martinozzi, niece of Cardinal Mazarin, and, as we shall see, they too were joined to Madame de Longueville by the holiest of ties. Madame de Longueville lived for several years chiefly on her husband's estates, trying with all the powers of her generous nature to atone for past mistakes and sins. She had two or three great friends, and among them the holy and devout Mademoiselle de Vertus, who lived with her for many years

and outran her, so to speak, on the road towards Heaven.

It was not until 1661 that, through Madame de Sablé, Madame de Longueville became acquainted with Port Royal and with Mère Angélique. She was in great trouble. The Duc de La Rochefoucauld had published his memoirs and had thought fit to vilify and ridicule the woman who had sacrificed herself for him, and in addition to this trouble she, in common with all the leaders of the Fronde, was nearly ruined.

As M. Cousin tells us: "Madame de Longueville and her sister-in-law, the Princesse de Conti, pushed generosity to such a degree that they seriously impoverished themselves, and they made it a duty, at the time of a great famine, almost to support entire provinces which the Fronde had desolated."

And it was at this period, when she was worn out by worries and unable to find real aid from her advisers, that she first saw Mère Angélique, who, like everyone else, was fascinated by the still graceful and gracious lady. Some letters passed between them; here is one of them:—

"Your Highness has so greatly abashed my lowliness by the kind and humble words of the letter you have honoured me by writing, that I needed some days to think over it, for I feel unworthy, not only of being treated in a way so out of proportion to what I am, but even of being thought of at all. But indeed I own to you, Madame, that I am most truly comforted by seeing that the renewal of piety, which God in His Mercy has renewed in your soul, has begun with such great humility; for I know it is a real and sure sign that that renewal will be lasting and true, and I am grieved that I am too unworthy to help your Highness. It is true that as I am a companion of many women who serve God in truth, I hope that they will help me to obtain from God what you desire, and what He cannot refuse you, since it is He Himself Who inspires that desire.

"How happy you are that you wish most of all to grow in grace and in all virtues which grace produces, and that you have come to know by the light of faith,

and not by vain philosophy, that all the greatness of the world is but vanity. All these sad adventures, and the strange changes which happen in the world, could not, any more than could the extent of your own intelligence and the force of reason, have forced you to return so entirely to God: His goodness alone has granted you that mercy."

Madame de Longueville's great wish was now to place herself under M. Singlin's direction. He was not anxious to undertake the office, but he was won over, and from now until her death in 1679 the Princesse was the firm and faithful friend of Port Royal, and one of M. Singlin's spiritual children until his death. He was at this time in concealment, as we have seen, and was obliged to disguise himself as a physician when he went to the Hôtel de Longueville. Fontaine gives us an edifying account of what he learned as to M. Singlin's dealings with the sick soul. He was not at all disposed to allow her to practise excessive austerities, and was far more anxious that she should practise spiritual rather than bodily mortifications.

To overcome her pride, her love of distinction, her desire to play a great part in her world, that desire which had dragged her into the Fronde, inspired as she had been by Rochefoucauld with the idea of being an important person, now M. Singlin checked her desire to be, as it were, distinguished in piety. To do her duty towards her own people, in her own sphere, that was the task he asked her to take up, and to give up any idea of the Religious Life. And with sweetness and docility she threw herself into a more diligent care for the things of her home, for her husband and children. M. Singlin would allow no extravagances in devotion, no conspicuous austerities. In 1661 she made a Retreat at Port Royal and wrote out a general confession. Soon after this her husband died, and M. Singlin continued to give her the same sensible reasonable counsel, aiding her in the life of prayer and of devotion, and treating her so gently that she herself was surprised, and expressed this feeling when she found herself

absolved and allowed to receive the Blessed Sacrament.

His answer ought to remove the idea that the directors of Port Royal tried to keep penitents from Holy Communion.

He says that true penitence is shown by almsgiving, prayer, mortifications of passions, patient enduring of suffering and of injuries, self-denial, and ruling one's life so that all one's actions are consecrated to God. And he goes on, that when anyone wills to live this life of consecration, and is truly penitent, that soul should not be refused the Sacraments.

He tells his illustrious penitent to bear patiently all that distresses her, and to make restitution as far as lay in her power.

M. Singlin did his best to encourage the trembling soul, terrified by its own sins and by the fear of God. He gives her admirable advice as to the use of her time, and forbade useless and discouraging brooding over past days. Her sons were anything but joys to her. The eldest, the Count of Dunois, was almost half-witted; he had taken orders. The second, the Count de Saint Paul, who was passionately loved by his mother, caused her sufficient sorrow by his apparent want of affection for her.

"Il est de la justice de Dieu sur mes péchés qu'ayant servi pour la joie, je receuille présentement bien des chagrins."

She confided some of her anxieties to M. Singlin, but a young man of twenty would hardly be restrained by attacks on the drama, which all the Port Royalists held in abomination. M. Singlin wrote a long discourse on the subject. There are some beautiful exhortations written for her when she was ill and about to receive, not only Holy Communion, but also Unction. His words breathe the calm trustfulness of a soul which is stayed on God; the very Peace of God flows out from these pages written so long ago to comfort and

encourage a tired wounded sheep, to bring it fully into the embrace of the Good Shepherd.

"As it is Jesus Christ Himself who comes to feed you with His Divine Flesh, so it is right that it should be He who speaks to you. His Flesh is life-giving and His word is the word of life. . . . Lord, Thy mercy has been with me all the days of my life; it will be with me until and through eternity. . . . Destroy what I have done; but save Thine own work. Save the price of Thy Blood. Finish the work Thou hast begun. Abide with me, so that in life and in death, on earth and in Heaven, I may abide in Thee."

And in another of his written exhortations, he says to her:—

"Place in His hands your soul, your body, your life, your eternity, and say to Him, following the thought of a great saint: 'My God, as Thou hast given me all although I was unworthy of all, finish what Thou hast begun. Destroy in me all that is of me, and perfect all that which is of Thee.'"

Again, on the occasion when she was to receive Holy Communion and Unction, he writes:—

"Jesus Christ symbolized the whole Christian life when He appeared to His Disciples at Emmaus. He walks with them, He teaches them, He feeds them. That is the grace He has brought you. He has taught you by His word; He has fed you by His Body.

"Let this thought bring you humility, as you realise your falls, and confess that you cannot but fall. But when you have seen this cause for grief, fix your eyes at once on the goodness of God. His mercy never seems greater than when it is concerned with my great distress. Say to Him: 'My soul is weak, and my body is about to abandon me. Leave me not, O my God, I shall find all my strength in Thee. Thou didst die for me; Thou art risen for me. . . . I put my soul into Thy hands.'"

In her general confession, which was written out by her after a Retreat at Port Royal, she tells quite simply what advice had been given, what resolutions she had

made. She was to practise detachment from the world. "I was to regard myself as a person to whom even lawful things are forbidden, because of my self-abandonment to unlawful things; I was far away from God through the possession of these, so I must, through His grace, draw nigh to Him by the willing sacrifice of those."

"I have been told [no doubt by M. Singlin] to repeat in my heart the seven Penitential Psalms, at different times.

"I will divide my time between prayer, reading, and working with my hands, so far as I can. This work shall be for the poor.

"I am recommended to apply to myself the words of our Lord Jesus Christ to the Syro-Phenician woman, to feel really and truly that I am one of the dogs who are unworthy of the smallest crumbs of God's grace. I found myself dwelling a great deal on this thought on one of the days of my Retreat.

"I have been told to say a Miserere every day, prostrate on the ground.

"I have been told to awaken every night at two o'clock, so that I can pray for a little while, and ask pardon for my sins."

And, indeed, abiding sorrow for sin is ever the mark of true saints, however much they know and require to know that they are forgiven.

She goes on to say that before she began her general confession, M. Singlin had wished to know if she were willing to enter the Religious Life, if circumstances permitted, and if she were willing to do and bear anything and everything, not only as tokens of repentance, but out of pure love to God. She speaks much of a letter which she had received some time before from M. Singlin, and which had greatly helped her, and she says :—

"Since my reconciliation, I have felt great peace, and that peace has changed even into joy every now and then."

Perhaps there is no greater encouragement to faith, and no greater incentive in the struggle for outward

unity than the age-long testimony of the inward unity of Christendom. Century after century the same remedy is applied to sin-sick souls—our Lord Himself. The witness is one, the language singularly alike; from His disciples, little as they resemble one another in temperament, occupation, station, or national characteristics, comes this testimony; they meet each other as brethren in Him who makes of all nations one. It is sad that His disciples who speak the same language should misunderstand one another so grievously—that such a shepherd of souls as Singlin should be suspected by good men of heresy. But it is the wounds which He meets in the house of His friends which most deeply pierce the Master. And of these wounds, the quarrels between His servants are not the least to be deplored, and wept over, and repented of.

The death of M. Singlin was a profound sorrow to Madame de Longueville and her friend Mademoiselle de Vertus. As we said, M. de Saci became her director until his arrest. After this, she found a great help in M. Marcel, a parish priest of Paris, and she wrote constantly to Pavillon, the holy Bishop of Alet, who sent her letters of spiritual direction. The Duc de Longueville died in 1663; the husband and wife had long been perfectly reconciled, and affection had grown up between them. At his death Madame de Longueville gave herself up more completely to a life of prayer, and threw herself more entirely into the interests of Port Royal. In her house Antoine Arnauld and Nicole found refuge, and the revision of the translation of the New Testament was undertaken in the Hôtel de Longueville, and was finished there. Madame de Longueville found Nicole a more agreeable guest than the great Doctor. On the whole, he had better manners and knew more of the customs of the great world than did Antoine.

We have already narrated her share (and it was a great one) in bringing about the peace of the Church. After this event, Madame de Longueville built herself a small house at Port Royal des Champs, and divided

her time between Port Royal and the Carmelite Convent at Paris. But this was not until after the death of her favourite son, who fell in battle at the famous passage of the Rhine in the war which Louis XIV. had undertaken against Holland, on account of "sa mauvaise satisfaction, sa *gloire* interessée." This son of hers, the young Duc de Longueville, seems to have been a gifted and charming person, and the *Histoire de Port Royal* relates that before departing for the campaign, he had made his confession and had distributed alms. Madame de Sévigné has described the grief of the heart-stricken mother in two of her immortal letters; there was, if not intimacy, at least friendship between the two illustrious women.

The Prince and Princesse de Conti's deaths were great sorrows, and Mademoiselle de Vertus having retired altogether to Port Royal, the last few years of this stormy life were very sad and lonely; but she never wavered in the path which led her to the light, and in time the peace which passeth all understanding reigned entirely in her heart.

Condé was with her at the time of her death, the 15th April 1679. She was fifty-nine, and had practised penitence and devotion for more than twenty years.

Sainte Beuve rightly and beautifully says of her that her real crown of glory was that wonderful humility which was granted to her, and in which she increased up to the day when she laid down her burden and passed into the other life. She was not a learned or even a very clever woman, but she was an excellent judge of character; she was kind, affectionate, and loyal to her friends.

One of the sternest of the Port Royal "Solitaires" wrote of her to his sister, the Duchesse d'Epernon:—

"So Madame de Longueville has set out on that long journey—Eternity, from which no one returns. Deaths of this kind, deaths of people who are of high rank in the world, and above all when we have lived in some intimacy with those who are gone, impress us for a short time; but the impression soon passes, and we do not try to

keep it. But for a little while, nothing else will be talked about. I believe she is among the blessed, and that God has been merciful to her. She loved the Church and the poor . . . and I recall many of her letters in the early days of her conversion, which were full of penitence and humility. She had these always, and these afflictions which she has endured during the last year will indeed have been to her as penance."

The same writer[1] in another letter says :—

"I don't want to set her up as a Saint who has gone from this world straight to the Vision of God ; all which happens in the other world is hidden from us : but nevertheless it is true that very few persons in that station of life are seen taking up her way of life, and remaining steadfast to the very end, in the great truths of religion. In absolute self-disregard, which she showed even in her dress, and in unfailing regularity in duty, she has manifested all these. There were infirmities, who is without them? She saw and mourned over them : that is nearly all God asks of us."

Indeed, as Sainte Beuve says, this letter is a true funeral oration.

With her death ended the short-lived peace of Port Royal.

Port Royal had another devoted friend in Madame de Sablé, but she was a friend who reserved the right to criticise, and who by no means thought it a matter of duty to say with reference to Port Royal, "Do I not hate them that hate thee?" She was, however, truly devout, a true disciple of Port Royal, and her later years were marked by most real humility and penitence. She had many friends, but the only one among her several special friends, who directly comes into our history, is Madame de Longueville, and it is to Madame de Sablé that we owe Madame de Longueville. Madame de Sablé was twenty years older than her friend, and loved her from the very day of their meeting. She was a faithful friend ; but little absurdities, little weaknesses,

[1] M. de Pontchâteau.

clung to her all her life—a taste for elegant and refined cooking, and a morbid dread of infection.

As we know, Madame de Longueville once fell ill of smallpox, and some of the scandal-mongering chroniclers, who had a special dislike to Madame de Sablé, particularly Tallemant des Reaux, dilated much on the friend's fear of the Hôtel de Longueville. Considering what smallpox was in the seventeenth century, even a friend may be pardoned for being a little shy of visiting a very recently recovered patient; but Madame de Sablé's nervousness was ever a subject of raillery even amongst her best friends. We find in later years the grave and austere Mère Angélique making playful allusions to this fear.

Among the many distinguished and admirable women of the seventeenth century the Marquise de Sablé holds a prominent place. She did not possess the fascination of Anne Geneviève de Bourbon (Duchesse de Longueville), but, as Cousin says in his delightful book on Madame de Sablé, she possessed a striking union of gifts, she had understanding, good sense, kindness; in a word, what her age and society understood by "politesse." Her special and surpassing gift was to influence and inspire other people; and such men as Rochefoucauld, Pascal, Nicole, looked up to her, and respected her judgment.

Madeleine de Souvré was the daughter of the Marquis de Courtenvaux, and his life and adventures carry us back to the troublous times of the Wars of Religion and the League. He died in 1626. Madeleine was born in 1599, and was one of seven children, four sons and three daughters. One of her grand-nieces married Louvois, Louis XIV.'s famous War Minister.

Madeleine was a beautiful and witty girl, and was described by Mademoiselle de Scudéry in the famous novel of the day, *Le Grand Cyrus*. She was a noted member of the society of which the Hôtel de Rambouillet was the centre, and in fact influenced the tone of that society almost as much as the gifted hostess.

"Elle devient donc bien vite le type de la parfaite précieuse."

It was said that the brilliant and unfortunate Henri de Montmorency and Madame de Sablé had been much attached to each other.

Madeleine de Souvré married, in 1614, Philippe Emanuel de Laval, Marquis de Sablé; very little seems to be known of him, but Mademoiselle de Scudéry, in her *Grand Cyrus*, gives us to understand that the marriage was not a very happy one. As M. Cousin says: "Mademoiselle de Scudéry could hardly have ventured to describe, under a disguise which was no disguise, fictitious circumstances in Madame de Sablé's life." Madame de Sablé retired to her estate of Sablé, and read, and studied, and regained her health. She had four children. Her only daughter became a nun in the Convent at Rouen, of which one of Madame de Sablé's sisters was the Abbess; one of her three sons became Bishop of La Rochelle; another son, the Marquis de Bois Dauphin; and the third was the handsome and brave Guy de Laval, one of the great Condé's gallant band of heroic friends, who was killed at Dunkirk in 1646.

The loss of her gallant boy in 1646 was a most bitter grief, and there were many troubles and various vicissitudes. Madame de Sablé was growing old, but she had not to begin, as it were, a life of devotion; already in 1640 she had written to Mère Angélique about her spiritual needs. For some years after this she lived in the world in a hotel in the Place Royal, with her closest and dearest friend, the Comtesse de S. Maure, who herself was religious in a quiet and decorous, not very enthusiastic fashion.

Madame de Sablé made retreats at Port Royal, and wished very much for direction from M. Singlin. Mère Angélique wrote in 1657:—

"My very dear Sister, put away this naughty idea, that it is because he does not care for you that M. Singlin is fearful of making advances: he would be just the same for everyone; he treats everyone in the same

way. Indifference is not one of his characteristics; he has, both naturally and through grace, the best and kindest of hearts in the world; and I can assure you he would give his life for your salvation. But God has granted him exactly what the knowledge of the grace of Jesus Christ would produce; that is, humility, and the sense of the absolute incapacity of the natural man. . . . That is the reason why he is always fearful to make advances in the direction of souls, lest he should hurt instead of helping. . . . Alas, my dear, we ought to reverence this holy manner of acting instead of being vexed by it. If all directors acted in this way, how many ills they would avoid. But you see, my dear, our natural pride dislikes this; and ladies who are accustomed to adoration find him terribly rough. . . . Overcome this inclination bravely, my dear; and after having offered to God your needs, address yourself humbly to him, whom God has given you, and ask him to help you. He will never be wanting, so long as God gives him the power: be assured of that, and that he will pray for you and desire earnestly that God will increase in you His holy grace."

In 1655 Madame de Sablé built a house within the precincts of Port Royal de Paris, and lived a devotional life, but was never quite able to surmount her fears of infection, her trifling ailments, and a good deal of self-indulgence. It is wonderful how gentle and wise Mère Angélique was. This is one of her letters :—

"It seems to me, dear Sister, that it is a long time since I had the honour of hearing how you are. So I ask some tidings from you, dear Sister, wishing much that they should be good alike as to the health of your soul and of your body. I ask both from God, with great affection; especially the latter, because I hope it will aid you to labour for the first with more courage and care, by setting you free from uneasiness which distracts you. . . . It has just come into my head to tell you quite simply that it seems to me you would do well to see N. (M. Singlin), so that you can make your confession and communicate on Sunday, if he allows you, so that you can prepare to spend the holy time dedicated to our Lord's Advent; but, dear, please do not take this thought of mine as an order, I only mean

it as a simple suggestion, so that you can lay it at times before God in order to ask Him to give you the wish, for if He does not speak, no good will come. The day is declining, my dear, and the night is approaching. We must lose no time in preparing for the bright day of Eternity. The best way is to profit by all troubles of mind and of body, by patience, offering them to God as a satisfaction for our faults."

No doubt, with all her goodness and kindness of heart, Madame de Sablé was often a little troublesome to the Mothers of Port Royal, who had enough troubles of their own without being forced to attend to a great lady's fancies and trifling complaints. It is wonderful how the stern Mère Angélique, who spared neither herself nor any of her nuns, sympathised with and doubtless influenced and trained Madame de Sablé. Nowhere does Mère Angélique show to better advantage than in her dealings with imperfect souls, whether in the world or in the cloister. Mère Angélique loved the graceful, accomplished, fanciful lady, and wrote to her charming letters from Port Royal des Champs. In one she says (I quote from M. Cousin):—

"I must really confess to you that the two last times I saw you I felt something for you which I never felt before, which made me feel your absence more painfully, and the need of submitting it to the command of God. It is thus that I find my strength in everything, and I beg you also to do the same, 'and to seek your treasure'; how much this word has pleased me [probably, as Cousin says, Madame de Sablé had herself used this expression], but not so much in reading as in prayer, or rather by the desire of the heart. . . . Content yourself, my dearest Sister, with the New Testament. I am so thankful our Lord has given you affection for it, for although all Holy Scripture is equally worthy of love and reverence, the Holy Gospel of our Incarnate Lord ought to give us very special feelings."

Few of the great Mother's letters are more touching and beautifully simple than this, and probably the friend-

ship had not been without good to her own great soul; for to flow out from the great Love of God in human love, is always a fresh means of grace. From Mère Agnès Madame de Sablé also received many letters.

Madame de Sablé had her weaknesses, but want of courage was not one of them, and as the storm of persecution gathered round and burst upon the Community, she conceived the happy idea of enlisting Madame de Longueville. We saw how this was accomplished, and the excellent results thereof.

Madame de Sablé is as closely connected with Port Royal as her more illustrious friend, but nevertheless she did not escape hurting the feelings of the sensitive Community. She had not thought it necessary to take a very distinct side, and she had committed what seemed to not a few of the Port Royalists the unpardonable sin of making her confessions to their particular foe, l'Abbé Chamillard. This was a disloyalty hard to forgive. Angélique de St Jean, who never liked Madame de Sablé, was really offended. M. d'Andilly forgave, after some correspondence. We can quite imagine that Angélique de St Jean, who had no spirit of compromise, whose fortitude resembled obstinacy, and who had never been able really to endure any kind of submission to the signature, had little toleration for the high-bred, polished, graceful, and self-indulgent lady who had so many "rapprochements" with the world; and under whose influence Rochefoucauld had produced his *Maxims*. But in spite of these vexations, Madame de Sablé had a peaceful life in the house at Port Royal de Paris.

She was the centre of a very distinguished *coterie*, and it is a wonderful tribute to her intellect, that such a man as Rochefoucauld should have submitted his *Maxims* to her criticism, and that Pascal in rather earlier days should have been one of her circle.

M. de La Rochefoucauld was not the only "sayer of sayings." The society of which Madame de Sablé was the centre had conceived a great love for maxims and aphorisms, and the gifted hostess herself wrote a set of

maxims; in fact, La Rochefoucauld submitted his own to the criticism of the company. It hardly comes into our subject to enter into any detailed examination of the celebrated book, which was criticised by several ladies of the circle; an old friend, the Princesse de Guemenée, wrote a penetrating and characteristic sentence: "He judges every one by himself," she writes, observing that the author concludes all men to be incapable of disinterested kindness. "Perhaps he is right about the great mass of people, but assuredly there are persons who desire nothing except to do good." How true is this reflection!

It is interesting to observe at this time the beginning of our modern reviews, and of the system known as "log-rolling." *Le Journal des Savants* made its first appearance in 1665, and for it Madame de Sablé wrote a review of the *Maxims*, which review the author corrected. This is a delicious episode, and is another proof that human nature in authors, as well as in everybody else, is much the same in the seventeenth as in the twentieth century.

Madame de Sablé did not follow her friends to Port Royal des Champs, and, as she was already seventy, one can hardly wonder at her reluctance. She wrote to M. de Singlin to ask his advice as to whether it was a duty to go to Port Royal des Champs, where there were no doctors. She got very little indulgence from M. Singlin, who exhorts her either in Paris, or in the country, to retire from the world and *repent*. "Remembering that terrifying word which our Lord said to His Apostles concerning those on whom the tower had fallen—Except ye repent, ye shall all perish."

We have said before, it was the strength and the weakness of Port Royalists, that they regarded the world with such profound horror. The Catholic Church is the home for us all, but Port Royal was really only fitted for souls of a particular type. Poor Madame de Sablé was living a devout life, and the supposition that she was still unconverted and impenitent seems somewhat severe. How she must have

longed for Mère Angélique, so wise, so bracing, and so affectionate!

It is not improbable that the influence of her friend Madame de S. Maure prevented any very great or striking developments in Madame de Sablé, both before and after Madame de S. Maure's death. The latter was not a "dévote," nor a Jesuit, nor a Jansenist, and she disliked the endless controversy on the subject of grace. Madame de Sablé lost this dearest friend in 1663, and this loss was one of the greatest of her sorrows. From that time her intimacy with Madame de Longueville increased, and the kindness which Condé's sister manifested to her less enduring friend is remarkable.

And Madame de Sablé was not unworthy of this friendship. She grew in the spiritual life, and growth is the great sign of a true conversion. The Love of God made up to her in time for the loss of other things of this world, and for infirmities and sorrows.

In 1675 she died, and was buried by her own special wish in the parish cemetery, without any of the ceremonies peculiar to her rank.

A few words must be given to Madame de Longueville's dear friend, Mademoiselle de Vertus, daughter of Clarence de Bretagne, Comte de Vertus, who was descended from that famous Anne of Brittany, Duchess of Brittany in her own right, who married in succession two kings of France, Charles VIII. and Louis XII. Mademoiselle de Vertus may be reckoned among the Princesses of Port Royal, says Sainte Beuve.

She was not happy in her home surroundings. Her mother, the daughter of a noble who played the part of Figaro for Henry IV., was beautiful and reckless, and by her adventures, which may be read in Tallement de Reaux's *Chronique scandaleuse*, seems to have produced a sort of Christian revolt in this daughter. From her early youth Mademoiselle de Vertus led as far as she could the life of devotion, and kept the rule of St Benedict. Her elder sister was Madame de Montbazon,

whom we encountered in Madame de Longueville's younger days.

The friendless girl was introduced into the world which had proved so hard for Anne de Bourbon, and we know very little of her life. Tallement talks of a love affair with La Rochefoucauld, but how much truth there is in this we know not. She seems in some way or another soon to have become homeless, and to have lived with one or other great lady, her detestable mother apparently doing nothing for her. A harbour of refuge was opened to her by Madame de Longueville; both appear to have been drawn to God at the same time.

Yet, poor woman, she was, although a great lady, in the painful position of something very like dependence; a "vieille fille" in France at all times is apt to be in a false position, and a lady whose only portion was a pension granted to her by Mazarin and paid irregularly, was indeed to be pitied. But probably much that was disagreeable in her life disappeared when she was established in the Hôtel de Longueville. She was clever, and possessed of real goodness of heart as well as of devotion. We saw how much M. Singlin was to her as well as to Madame de Longueville, and how much she too depended on M. de Saci. Indeed Fontaine seems to think that she aided Madame de Longueville in her labours for the peace of the Church solely that M. de Saci might be delivered.

To Mademoiselle de Vertus' great joy, in 1672, after many visits and Retreats at Port Royal, she took up her final abode in a small annex built on to Madame de Longueville's house. Her health was very bad, and before she settled at Port Royal she had been dangerously ill, and she was now over fifty.

It was she who broke to Madame de Longueville the terrible news of her son's death. Madame de Sévigné has set forth the scene in one of her most brilliant bits of description.

In 1674 Mademoiselle de Vertus was allowed to wear the habit of a novice without being laid under vows. Her health, which confined her to bed for days together,

prevented her Profession. But she dedicated herself as far as she could to a life of true obedience and of prayer. And indeed it seems as if such provision for many people who for one reason or another cannot enter the life of Religion might very well be made in our day and in our own Communion.

M. de Saci performed the ceremony of clothing the novice in the usual way, with some slight changes.

She lived in this perpetual noviciate until 1691, of which time eleven years were spent wholly in bed.

M. Hamon watched over her health until his death. And as directors, M. de Saci, and after him M. Le Tourneux and M. de Guet, gave her spiritual aid.

There is a charming simplicity about her later letters, a beautiful humility. She too shared the first great Mère Angélique's fear of death, of God, and it was M. de Guet, afterwards a celebrated guide of souls, who soothed and encouraged her in her last days.

The Princesse de Conti certainly must be numbered among the great ladies of Port Royal. For although Anne Maria Martinozzi was not a very intimate friend of Port Royal, she comes into tolerably close connection with "les nôtres" through her sister-in-law Madame de Longueville, through Pavillon, the Bishop of Alet, and finally through Claude Lancelot, to whom she entrusted her boys' education.

The Martinozzi were a noble Roman family: the princess's mother was the sister of Mazarin, and having been left a widow with several daughters and not particularly large means, she was thankful to send Anne Maria to Paris, where the little girl of nine was kindly received by Anne of Austria. Other sisters were also sent. Anne Maria was married at sixteen to the Prince de Conti, younger brother of the great Condé.[1] Armand de Bourbon, Prince de Conti, had a good deal of mother wit, but was absolutely at the mercy of anyone with a stronger mind than his own; at the time of the Fronde (for which escapade he duly made his peace in 1653) he

[1] "Personne en effet n'était moins tentant comme époux qu'Armand de Conti."

was completely under the influence of his sister. "M. le Prince avoit pour tout ce que désiroit sa sœur une si grande déférence qu'il suivoit tous ses sentiments, n'agissoit que par ses conseils, ne vivoit et ne respiroit que pour elle."[1] And at the time of his marriage he was to a large extent under the influence of favourites. The Princesse, a mere girl of sixteen, beautiful, with fair hair and a graceful figure, found herself in a sufficiently difficult *milieu*. The Port Royal aversion for the world, and the extreme doubt which so many people felt as to its being possible for anyone in a prominent place to "*faire son salut*," seem very pardonable when one considers the ordinary atmosphere of the Court, or indeed of any great person's household. The Princesse did not greatly appreciate the Abbé de Cosnac, who had found much favour in Conti's eyes. De Cosnac represents a certain type of ecclesiastic; the pushing, by no means dishonest, but absolutely worldly person. He himself came of a very ancient family from the south of France, and had set his hopes on Conti's influence. He had no scruples, and used all his powers to have himself made Bishop of Valence at the mature age of twenty-six. In the meantime Conti, who was now Governor of Languedoc, was growing jealous. Louis XIV. had been paying the Princesse great attentions; these attentions, however, seem to have been repulsed with more than sufficient vigour. One thing is clear, that Louis XIV., up to the day of her death, held the Princesse in great esteem.

The Princesse joined her husband, and found a household full of intrigues, each fighting for his own hand. There was one Jacques Esprit, who had nearly taken orders, and who was specially blamed by the worthy De Cosnac for having put ideas of devotion into the Prince's head in order to "me nuire" (= destroy me). A very pretty confession for a Bishop, and there were others. But, mercifully, another influence was brought into Conti's life. He received a visit of pure

[1] *Daniel de Cosnac* (*Memoirs of*), b. 1630, d. 1703, Archbishop of Aix.

politeness from the Bishop of Alet, and it seemed to him as if he heard a voice saying that this was the man in whom he should confide. And he obeyed. Sudden conversions have never ceased to exist in the Church, and it is one advantage of a Christian and Catholic education, that at least a sinner who has been brought up in the fold knows that he must repent, must confess, must avail himself of the means of grace; Conti was brought to a very real and practical repentance by the Bishop. Like Zacchaeus, he was to restore fourfold. The Bishop would not hurry matters, and as Conti was obliged to return to Paris, M. d'Alet placed him under the direction of M. de Ciron, Chancellor of the University of Toulouse, and it was to him that Conti was to make his general confession.

De Ciron, who met Conti in Paris, was overwhelmed with dismay at the burden laid on him, but was comforted by his first interview, and seems to have been a most excellent spiritual guide for the sick soul of poor Conti, who was ill in body also.

But at first the Princesse was somewhat set against her husband's conversion. She had learned nothing of religion when she was a child: her husband was her religion. For she was most deeply attached to him, and her letters breathe the most unbounded affection. In some ways she was not attractive. She was proud, reserved, and apt to betray the characteristic Mazarin weakness—avarice. This comes out very unpleasantly in a story of De Cosnac's, of how she insisted on his paying her a gambling debt which he had thought a jest, and at the same time repudiated a debt which she owed him.[1] And indeed her dislike to De Cosnac, much more than love of money, may have prompted her to spite him; she was only nineteen. Suddenly she told her husband that she could resist no longer, and asked him to send for M. de Ciron. M. de Ciron guided them both, to Mazarin's great disgust. His Eminence informed Cosnac that De Ciron was a

[1] *Une Nièce de Mazarin*, par Edouard de Barthélemy, and also Sainte Beuve, vol. v., etc.

Jansenist who was exciting people in Paris, and said that the Bastille was a suitable place for such a priest, but De Cosnac persuaded the Cardinal merely to banish De Ciron to Toulouse, his own diocese, which was done, to the Contis' great disgust; for this exile De Cosnac got the credit. The Princesse did her best to have *him* sent to his neglected diocese.

The Prince and Princesse paid a visit to, or more strictly speaking, made a Retreat under M. d'Alet; the Princesse lodged in a Convent near the Palace. M. d'Alet gave them daily instructions, and restrained the impetuous ardour which would have led them to strip themselves of their worldly goods, and to lead the lives of "religious" in the world. In vain Conti begged to be allowed to resign his office of Governor. He was to keep it and do his best.

To Conti and his wife, after her conversion, was shown the need of restitution to the unfortunate provinces desolated by the second war of the Fronde. The Princesse sold her jewels and parted with most of the wealth which she had inherited from Mazarin. She wished very much to build a convent for Carmelites, and to decorate a church, but the Bishop would have none of this magnificent devotion, so flattering to the person who proposes it.

The Prince was as excessive in his austerity as he had been in his dissipation. He composed several treatises: one, *Traité des Devoirs des Grands*, and another, *Traité de la Comédie et des Spectacles selon la Tradition de la Foi.* He was determined that a troop of comedians who had been playing as the Troupe de Bourbon, should do so no longer. (It seems a pity that Molière and others should have had to view religion under so severe an aspect.) In one of his letters Antoine Arnauld strongly recommends the Mère du Fargis to advise her niece, la Duchesse de Lesdiguières, to read this book. Many of his rules for his household are excellent. As for instance Rule XVI.: "Payer exactement mes dettes et surtout les marchands et artisans."

There are most severe rules for the pages, who are

to rise very early and dress very quickly, and get into chapel in good time before the daily Mass. In their recreation they are never to play at cards, or be present at balls, or read romances. When not engaged in military exercises, they are to study mathematics. The whole scheme of life proposed for them would seem more suitable for students in a theological seminary than for the gay young creatures one generally supposes the pages attached to a great household to have been.

No Puritan could have been more extreme in his views.

Another rule is: "To see that missions are preached from time to time in places which need them."

The Prince died in 1666, and it is odd that it should be said that "he returned to the Church," for he had never left it. Père Rapin (quoted by Sainte Beuve) originates the story that Conti sent away M. d'Alet from his bedside, and declared that he was absolutely submissive as to the question of "fait" and "droit." How much of this is true, is impossible to say. The story does not seem probable, but its probability depends on the trustworthiness of the evidence. Now, in the *Histoire de Port Royal* it is expressly stated that De Ciron, who on the news of the Prince's illness had come to the Château de la Grange near Pézenas, where Conti was, received his last breath. It is possible that some zealous priest had found his way into Conti's room, and had asked the Prince before De Ciron's arrival whether he renounced his supposed errors. A very slight expression of submission to the Church, of which he was and always had been a dutiful son, could easily and with no bad intention be twisted into what would pass for a recantation.

In 1664 Conti had been very ill in Paris, and the parish priest of Saint Sulpice, on bringing him the Sacrament, had tried to induce him to cease to be under the direction of M. d'Alet. It will be remembered that it was in St Sulpice that absolution had been refused to M. de Liancourt. The Prince de Conti absolutely refused, and said that he would rather die with-

out the Sacrament than give up such a saint as M. d'Alet.

We must leave this matter; only, it is odd to see with what extraordinary rancour many writers mention anyone even remotely attached to Port Royal, how eager some are to speak of the *sect* of the Jansenists, as if some new religious body had been formed.

The Port Royalists and their friends were from first to last loyal Catholics, and had no more intention of leaving the Catholic Church than had St François de Sâles when he spoke to Mère Angélique of the evils which were sapping the life of the Church.

The Princesse de Conti began at twenty-nine the devoted and dedicated life of a Christian widow. She loved to write of herself as "Fabiole"—after St Jerome's friend and helper. She was tormented by terrible ill-health, which indeed cut short her life. She lived chiefly at Bouchet, a beautiful *Château* between Paris and Fontainebleau.

It is touching to read of this grave, reserved lady visiting the sick, and attending to people whom she would certainly have shrunk from not many years before. And one almost smiles at the sad, scrupulous soul which tormented itself as to whether the ordinary compliments and politenesses of society were not wrong. She is wanting in all the charm and grace which made her sister-in-law so lovable, but she has great qualities of strength, of steadfastness, and of sincerity. Madame de Sévigné calls her and Madame de Longueville the Mothers of the Church. Together they worked to bring about the peace of the Church; and the liberation of De Saci was probably due principally to the Princesse de Conti.

To Claude Lancelot, who had just finished the education of the Duc de Chevreuse, were entrusted the two young Conti princes. These were Louis Armand, b. 1661, and François Louis, b. 1664. Lancelot wrote an interesting letter to M. de Saci describing the education of the little boys. He seems to have begun his work in 1670. They worked a good many hours—

poor little mites—but they had hours of play; the good Lancelot describes his excellent system of teaching; how they read a modern Latin book of letters which he translated into French and made them turn back into Latin, exercising them in a conversational way on this; how the elder learned quite a large number of lines of Virgil; and how he taught them history. These tiny boys were taught dancing and fencing, for the Princesse had more sense than poor Conti, and knew that boys in their position must learn to bow, and to hold themselves properly. And then walks, what Claude calls "ascents of mountains," little hillocks we suppose; daily visits to their mother, probably visits to Paris, Mass two or three times a week, and much care about their daily prayer and their Sunday attendance at the High Mass, and Vespers and the Sunday lessons. They seem always to have had the Gospel and Epistle for the day explained to them before Mass, and on Sunday evenings Lancelot taught them the Catechism, and explained the Mysteries of the Faith to them as he thought suitable for their age. It is a pleasant picture, but one wonders if Lancelot was really happy in these great houses. In the same letter he says rather sadly, "It is difficult for anyone to make children respect their teacher, when the profession of a teacher is despised." Was "Madame" kind to the now not very young, obscure tutor, who was only in minor orders, who had once been the favourite pupil of St Cyran—in those now distant days when the little band of St Cyran's disciples taught in *Les Petites Écoles*, and perhaps dreamed dreams of what might come to pass? It is pathetic to find Lancelot here.

His stay at Bouchet was not long, for the Princesse de Conti died very suddenly in 1672, of apoplexy. She never rallied from the first attack. Madame de Sévigné gives a description of the rough way in which the poor little Princesse was treated in order to restore consciousness. "C'est à dire que si les pauvres patients ne mouroient pas de l'apoplexie, ils seroient à plaindre de l'état où on les met!"

Madame de Longueville was appointed guardian; it

is strange that she could not have retained Lancelot as the boys' tutor. He made objections to the boys being taken to the theatre, so was sent about his business. He ceased to instruct the sons of the great, retired to the Abbey of St Cyran, and became a Benedictine.

Of Jeanne de Schomberg, Duchesse de Liancourt, we have already spoken (p. 235).

There were several other ladies who sought in a more or less close connection with Port Royal the solitude for which many souls learn to long.

"Qui donc," says Montalembert, "à moins d'être complètement depravé par le vice ou appesanti par l'age et la cupidité, n'a pas éprouvé une fois au moins avant de mourir l'attrait de la solitude?"[1] The lesson which Port Royal taught was the overwhelming necessity of penitence, and it seems that if another such Community could spring up amongst us of the Anglican Communion, preaching the same lesson to the great ones of the world, again the same phenomena would be seen — of repentance and of retirement from worldly ambition, if not from work. Indeed, they are not wholly absent now. But it is chiefly good people who desire to give themselves more completely to God or who long to work for their brethren, who retire to convents or settlements. We have not yet understood that many need to learn the lessons of the Gospel from the beginning, and to cultivate the gardens of their own souls in solitude and penitence.

[1] *Les Moines d'Occident*, vol. i., Introduction.

PLAN OF THE ABBEY OF PORT ROYAL DES CHAMPS.

[*To face p.* 408.

CHAPTER XIX

THE AUTUMN OF PORT ROYAL (1669-1679)

SAINTE BEUVE says, at the beginning of the fifth volume of his history, that if any one had announced to the Port Royalists in 1669 that the last days of summer were passing for them and that the period of decay had begun, the speaker would not have been believed.

Everything seemed prosperous at first. M. de Pomponne, M. d'Andilly's second son, had been chosen by Louis XIV. as Secretary of State; the offer was made by the king in a letter written by Louis's own hand. M. d'Andilly himself basked in royal favour, and did not at once return to Port Royal; he had for years enjoyed the pleasures of friendship, of conversation with delightful people: he was much beloved. Madame de Sévigné gives a charming description of a gathering at a friend's house where she was sitting with M. d'Andilly, "à ma main gauche, c'est à dire à mon cœur"; this was written to M. de Pomponne, who was a great friend of hers. She also describes to her daughter the reception given to M. d'Andilly by Louis XIV., who was all that a loyal subject could have wished him to be. The old man was quite dazzled, and no wonder. It is difficult for us in this democratic age to put ourselves into the attitude of loyal subjects of Louis XIV.

In 1673 d'Andilly returned to Port Royal with his son, M. de Luzanci, and began again the life of study and of prayer. Everything was happy—to all appearance. M. Nicole and M. de Sainte Marthe, indeed,

thought that Port Royal was not retired enough, that there were too many carriages to be seen driving thither, too many great people. Madame de Longueville and Mademoiselle de Vertus established themselves in little houses built quite near the Convent. The Mère du Fargis was elected Abbess, and Angélique de St Jean, Prioress.

There were no more schools for boys, but girls were received, and a third generation of Arnaulds arrived in the persons of two daughters of M. de Pomponne.

M. de Saci and M. de Sainte Marthe were the confessors.

Agnès Arnauld was soon to lay down her burden. She passed away after a sharp, short illness on the 19th of February 1671, after seventy years of life in Religion. Indeed, the history of Port Royal is Agnès's history. She indeed escaped the misfortunes which overtook Mère Angélique in the unhappy Zamet period, as she was sent to Tard near Dijon, and was elected Abbess there; but except for that short interval of six years, Agnès spent all her Religious Life at Port Royal des Champs or Port Royal de Paris.

Her illustrious niece wrote of her that, "in Mère Agnès were to be ever seen a steady calmness, an unvarying wisdom, a gravity which was united with a sweetness which inspired truth and respect; she taught as much by example as by words." Angélique de St Jean wrote also a memoir entitled *Portrait de la Mère Catherine Agnès.* In this she says: "The whole earth for her was full of the Majesty of God. She saw Him, and adored Him, everywhere."

Agnès was always calm; death had no terrors for her. She lay down to rest aided by her dearly loved nephew, De Saci. Her redoubtable brother, Antoine Arnauld, arrived at Port Royal after her death. His funeral oration was very fine. He took the Transfiguration, the Gospel for the second Sunday in Lent in the Roman use, and reminding the Sisters that all that is said of the Master is said of the

LA R.MERE CATHERINE AGNES DE S PAVL ARNAVLD cy devant
Abbesse de Port Royal. Elle est morte le

[*To face p* 410.

servant, he applied the Gospel of the Transfiguration to her.

It was Agnès who wrote the Constitutions of Port Royal, which she carried out so fully in her own beautiful life.

As we saw long ago in the time of the *Chapelet Secret du Saint Sacrement*, Agnès united strong common-sense with a touch of mysticism, and about her letters and herself hangs a perfume of grace and of unction. She possessed a real literary gift, a touch of poetic fervour. M. Faugère's delightful preface to the two volumes of Agnès's Letters should be read by any who wish to see a just appreciation of Agnès, who in no way came behind her great sister.

She was laid in the choir of the church, and opposite to her grave was buried the heart of her illustrious sister Mère Angélique, whose body was left in Port Royal de Paris.

The book of Mère Agnès, *The Picture of a Perfect and of an Imperfect Religious*, would be edifying for any Community to read. The Mother gives the most beautiful and inspiring directions to aid the Sisters in saying Offices, and for prayers to be said when kneeling before the Holy Sacrament.

"To be present at the Celebration, or before the Sacrament is a species of Communion; in which the soul should lose itself in God, in a way that only His Holy Spirit can bring about or teach us. . . As you are not before the Tabernacle simply for yourself, but also for the whole Church, and as you have other times for thinking of yourself, you ought chiefly to use this period for praying for the whole Church, and for all the children of Jesus Christ, remembering the worship they should give Him, and the sense they ought to have of their own needs, which most of them are not able to do for themselves."

But Agnès goes on to say that if the Sister feels overwhelmed by her own frequent falls, and longs to pray for herself, she may do so; for her imperfections are part of the Church's imperfections, and the getting

rid of one's own imperfections is a contribution to the Church's perfection.

She reminds them that if a Sister is called to the sick, she should be as glad to perform this office as she is to take a share of the never-ceasing prayer before the Holy Sacrament.

And the Sister, though she may occupy herself by saying her Office, must never hesitate to break it off and attend to the needs of an invalid, which needs she must try to anticipate.[1]

The Mother's instructions on mental prayer are edifying. She is very insistent on the need of quietness in prayer (this does not mean Quietism), and of the need of faith in the willingness of Christ to impart His grace.

"You have nothing to do but to keep yourself open to Him, and as a dry land which seeks the water of His Grace—as a sick person coming to his physician, as a disciple seeking the Master, and as a feeble being attacked by enemies and seeking the protection of God, who longs to shelter under His Wings."

She tries to convince her children that the work of prayer is not a search for beautiful thoughts, but a perpetual effort to keep one's mind in absolute simplicity.

In common with all others who have thought deeply on prayer, she warns the Sisters that it is want of recollection, it is the letting oneself be too much distracted by outward things, which hinder fervent prayer.

And she says excellent words as to how a "religieuse parfaite" should bear dryness in prayer, and that it is good at these times to use verses of Psalms and of the Gospels.

Her directions as to work and the keeping of silence are admirable; and Agnès reminds her Sisters that a special remembrance is attached to each Office.[2]

[1] The most devout of us nowadays would prefer to be nursed by people who said their Offices *outside* our rooms.

[2] It seems a pity that in saying the Offices of Terce, Sext, None, the special remembrance of the Passion is not invariably made.

Mass was always said after Terce, and afterwards half an hour was spent in reading.

The words on the Conferences of the Chapter, on the kind of faults to be noticed, all breathe the same desire for perfection, for no thought except the one of pleasing God.

The whole day is considered by the Mother, and advice for every moment, and sacrament, and office is given.

She also wrote some beautiful devotions on the Passion, and a set of *Occupations Intérieures* for the benefit of the lay Sisters. She gives them explanations of each of the petitions of the Lord's Prayer, and of all the Mysteries of the Passion.

She concludes with a set of maxims or directions, which she calls *Manuel des Âmes Religieuses.* They are most edifying. Here are two: "Avoid as much as you can great people, in great positions, and remember the world is very contagious." (Le monde est bien contagieux.)

"You must think of 'Religion' as being a Sacred School which you have entered, to learn in it with greater facility to love God, and to serve Him by a continual outpouring of love, humility, and obedience."

Du Fossé's Memoirs provide us with many interesting details of the life at this time. His mother left Normandy and took up her abode with him and his brother, who was known as M. Le Sieur de Borroger. It is so rare to find anything like interest in ordinary human affairs, among the race of true Port Royalists, that Du Fossé's account of his brother's marriage is most consolatory, although the affair is destitute of any suspicion of romance. The bride selected for M. de Borroger was the daughter of M. Jean le Maître, a brother of M. de Saci, who was usually known as M. de Sainte Elme, and the young lady was styled the Demoiselle de Sericourt.

There were various small vexations, which are most amusing to read about. M. du Fossé, who was con-

ducting the affair, "selon les règles," wrote a letter to M. de Saci, who received it as he was about to hear confessions, put the letter into his pocket, and promptly forgot all about it. Weeks passed away, and the perplexity of the Du Fossé family was great, when at last M. de Saci found the letter and all went on smoothly. But the bride had not been consulted at all, and her dismay was great. She had been educated at Port Royal, and she regarded the household of the Du Fossés as a little bit of Port Royal in the world. She cried a great deal, but her relations simply told her that M. de Borroger or Port Royal itself must be her portion —so she chose M. Thomas du Fossé as a *pis aller.* They were married in 1677 by the great Arnauld, who preached them a most eloquent sermon, and the marriage seems to have been happy. Madame de Borroger was, it is said, an example to all Christian matrons. We find a pleasing account by Du Fossé, of a journey with his brother and sister-in-law to visit her great-uncle, the Bishop of Angers.

The Borrogers seem to have been very fond of M. du Fossé; after his mother's death they persuaded him to live with them.

Madame de Sévigné paid one or two visits to Port Royal. An uncle of hers, Charles de Sévigné, was one of the Solitaires; this same Charles had been a soldier, and on one of his campaigns, after the sacking of a town, a poor little girl of three or four years had by some chance been found by him. He took her up in his arms, rolled her up in his soldier's cloak, and resolved to take care of her. And the brave and chivalrous soldier kept his resolution faithfully. The child grew up and in due time became a nun.

Dom Clérmencet says: "A very few years after this he experienced the truth of the promise of our Lord, that what is given to Him in the person of the least of His little ones, is repaid." Sévigné was converted by and by, and was attracted to a life of penitence, which he led, first at Port Royal de Paris and then at Port Royal des Champs.

Sévigné is a most lovable person, simple, sincere, full of real personal adoration for our Lord as the Good Shepherd who seeks and finds the wandering sheep. He always had in his Oratory a picture of the Good Shepherd. He was a close friend of Port Royal through good report and evil report, and was constantly doing acts of kindness for his friends large and small; amongst others, he built a new Cloister for Port Royal des Champs. He was, as Sainte Beuve says, the true and chivalrous knight of Port Royal.

Madame de Sévigné writes in January 1674:—

"Le Port Royal est une Thébaide, c'est un paradis; c'est un désert où toute la dévotion du Christianisme s'est rangée; c'est une sainteté répandue dans tout le pays, à une lieu à la ronde. Il y a cinq ou six solitaires qu'on ne connaît point, qui vivent comme les pénitents de Saint Jean-Climaque, les religieuses sont des anges sur terre."

Madame de Sévigné does not seem to have had much talk with her uncle when she paid her visits.

It is in the same letter that she describes Port Royal des Champs: "C'est un vallon affreux, tout propre à inspirer le goût de faire son salut."

Sainte Beuve quotes a gorgeous description written by a priest, one Père Comblat, who evidently regarded Port Royal as already a sacred place of pilgrimage, and gives to his burst of admiration a delicious touch of exaggeration; he was from the south of France and had the fervour of the south.

Mademoiselle de Vertus is transformed into a Breton Princesse, and the beloved physician Hamon has left the Court for Port Royal, and in addition to all this, there is mysterious wealth in the convent brought by huge dowries. But when he comes to describe the services, he, as Sainte Beuve points out, marks a characteristic which has always been impressed on the close observers of Port Royal—the grave, deep piety with which the Offices were said.

"I do not know how to speak of the Divine Office, which they did not render in the manner of women, but rather in that of angels: for what particularly delighted me, was that these holy souls understood so perfectly what they said and gave the right tones and modulations of the voice to all that they sang in such a way that their voices spoke to the heart more wonderfully even than to the ear. . . . They sing the ordinary Roman Plain Song, according to the use of Paris, as they are in that diocese. . . . I was told that when people come to them with affected and 'worldly voices,' they are not allowed to sing for three or four months until they have learnt to listen. . . ."

And he also remarks with great delight the beautiful and distinct reading which prevailed in the Community.

Cardinal de Retz[1] visited Port Royal in 1674, probably to see M. d'Andilly; De Retz was certainly not the sort of person whom our friends would have delighted to honour had they not some reason to believe in a change which it seems certain he had undergone. How far he was converted in the Christian sense cannot be known.

M. d'Andilly passed away, surrounded by his children and grandchildren, in September 1674. He is the Patriarch of Port Royal; the constant friend in good days and bad days, the brother and father of many of the nuns. D'Andilly may have been glad when Louis XIV. was gracious, but he never feared to displease the king by his attachment to Port Royal. He shared to the full the absolute independence which was so characteristic of Port Royal, and which was perhaps the chief reason why Louis XIV. hated it so frankly and freely. It is impossible not to share Madame de Sévigné's affection for M. d'Andilly. There is not one of the Arnaulds quite so lovable and human, and as he gets older he grows in all good qualities; he never lost the geniality, the courtesy, the *savoir vivre* which had made for him so many friends. He died with the Nunc Dimittis on his lips. We feel that he is almost the last of the great ones of the first

[1] See *Ste Beuve's Port Royal*, vol. v., Appendix, Sur Cardinal de Retz.

generation. No one now is left except De Saci, and the gentle, gracious, shrinking Fontaine, and Lancelot. Antoine Arnauld and the rest are not of the first race, and have not exactly followed the path indicated by St Cyran.

It gives a real pain to one's heart to say good-bye to M. d'Andilly. His brother Antoine sang the funeral mass, said the burial service, and pronounced a funeral oration which can be read in Antoine Arnauld's letters.

It is now a suitable time to give a short account of Pierre Nicole, Antoine Arnauld's friend.

Nicole was born at Chartres in 1628, and was the son of an *avocat.* He had three sisters, two of whom entered the Religious Life.

Jean Nicole, the father, was an excellent classical scholar, and from him Pierre inherited the literary tastes which were so strongly marked in him.

Nicole studied at the Sorbonne, and began his literary career by a bit of controversial work directed against M. de Barcos, St Cyran's nephew, who had written a Treatise *Sur la Grandeur de l'Église de Rome;* Nicole thus put himself as it were against Port Royal. He had other links, however, with that Community—one of his sisters, who was to him what Euphèmie Pascal had been to her great brother, was a nun at Port Royal, and Mère Marie des Anges, whose story has already been told, was his aunt.

Nicole's career was successful, and his thesis for his Bachelor's degree was well spoken of. About this time, probably through his aunt, he began to teach in the Port Royal schools and to prepare for his Doctor's degree. But the troubles which were thickening round the Faculty of Theology, the controversies on Grace, and the affair of the Five Propositions, caused him to renounce further distinction with the self-effacement so characteristic of all the Port Royalists, and to retire to Port Royal and teach in the *Petites Écoles.* In 1654 Antoine Arnauld took possession of him, and the intimacy between the two began which was destined to last for many years.

From that moment Nicole was hardly ever without a pen in his hand. For a considerable time he and Arnauld lived under the roof of Madame de Longueville, insisting however on paying their own expenses, and only consenting to owe her the benefit of shelter and security.

Nicole saw much of Pascal in those days, and translated the *Provincial Letters* into Latin. We have already noticed the *Apologie pour les Religieuses de Port Royal*, and also the *Lettres Imaginaires* and the *Lettres Visionaires*. He composed a small volume on the Eucharist which was generally known as *La Petite Perpetuité*, for it grew into the three large volumes called *La Perpetuité de la Foi*.

Nicole's most considerable literary work is his *Essais de Morale*, a book probably more praised than read nowadays.

The *Essais de Morale* are not in any one particular order, or formed on any definite plan, but are reflections on various subjects which were suggested to Nicole from time to time; gathered together they fill fourteen volumes, of which the first six are on moral and religious subjects, varying considerably; for instance, one is on the duties of a Mistress of Novices, and following it is an essay on the duties essential to all Christians.

Nicole is essentially a different order of person from St Cyran, with his ideas of reform, or Pascal, with his passionate cries. He introduced the system of defence of Port Royal, which consisted in trying to prove that the supposed heresy was no heresy at all, was purely imaginary. He invented the phrase so well known in those weary controversies, "fait et droit." He was by no means appreciated by all the Port Royalists. Angélique de St Jean could not endure him, but as Sainte Beuve says, "these family secrets were well kept."

Nicole was always on the side of peace; he was a "Moderate," and he is not a person who excites one's love as do the true Port Royalists. We feel inclined

to sympathise with Angélique de St Jean. But Nicole never seems of the race of Port Royalists; he is only a distant cousin. And indeed one need only read his letter on M. de Saci's death, quoted by Sainte Beuve, to realise this inadequacy. He actually writes that M. de Saci was, in his opinion, a good man on the whole. To those who love the real race of Port Royal, this from Nicole is unbearable.

When the persecution burst out after Madame de Longueville's death, Nicole journeyed to Brussels to find Antoine Arnauld. But Nicole's heart failed him on being asked to proceed to Holland; he was not young, he was not strong, and he longed for some retreat where he could live in peace. And Nicole treating with the Archbishop of Paris for leave to retire to a quiet refuge is not altogether a satisfactory object for contemplation, and the friends of Antoine Arnauld were not pleased. Arnauld was generous, as indeed he always was to his friends; he defends Nicole, and says many things which are delightful reading. "Is it not right," he writes to one of the "Solitaires," "that M. Nicole should be at leisure to work for the Church, which he is always doing in one way or another? Is it not right that everyone should act as it is given to him to act? . . . he is not to be treated as a slave."[1] Arnauld was great and brave, Nicole gentle and good.

Nicole was compelled to wander a good deal, and only in 1683 did he receive permission to live in Paris.

He died in 1695, in a quiet, pious retreat, with books, and distinguished friends, and what he longed for—peace. Everyone respected him, and he wrote various books against the Reformed faith; his last work was directed against the Quietists, who had just arisen.

But he is sad; he thinks things are going from bad to worse, that the great people are dying and no one is growing up to take their place. He is not the last by any means of those sad Christians who are ever looking back—not forwards.

[1] Vol. iv., p. 502, *Lettres de M. Arnauld.*

He was not really a controversialist by nature, and was never happy when he was fighting. He was physically timid, and inclined to suspect danger where there was none.

But again, Sainte Beuve warns us not to depreciate Nicole, and quotes a saying: "La vertu d'Arnauld, les mœurs de Nicole, et le génie de Pascal."

In fine, he is an excellent example of a Moderate who has been dragged into weary controversies and forced—it is his own metaphor—into many a perilous voyage. He had resolved, when the peace of the Church came, to set out on no more! And yet he was forced into more than one controversy, and particularly in 1690, when anxious to prove what was supposed to be a particularly objectionable view on the doctrine of Grace to be a really harmless and orthodox opinion.

Another friend of Port Royal, Du Guet, refuted or tried to refute him.

Nicole wrote the Life of the Mère des Anges, and revised some of M. Hamon's works. He also wrote a Treatise on Prayer, which contains edifying remarks, and is steeped from end to end in quiet and deep piety, but is extraordinarily wearisome reading; and, indeed, Sainte Beuve's verdict is just when he says: "Nicole peut encore être agréable à étudier, il est decidément ennuyeux à lire."

The book usually known as *La grand Perpetuité de la Foi* was largely if not altogether written by Nicole, but he, with the self-effacement of the Port Royalists, preferred that Antoine Arnauld, who was a priest and a doctor, should alone place his name on the title page. To the three volumes Arnauld certainly contributed the dedicatory letter to Pope Clement. The Port Royalists cared nothing for literary fame. All these volumes grew out of a controversy with a minister of the Reformed faith, Claude, who had seen a MS. copy of the *Petite Perpetuité* and had attacked it. Nicole published a new edition of the *Petite Perpetuité* with a reply to Claude, and began to prepare the larger work, of which the three volumes were dedicated to three

successive Popes. The work had a great success, and, it is said, converted Turenne. Bossuet held it in great esteem.

The pastor who was the opponent (M. Claude) united a great deal of learning and ability with a "pompous eloquence," to quote Du Fossé. M. Claude was minister of the Reformed faith at Charenton in 1666. One of his great arguments was the astonishing one that the Greek Church did not believe in the Real Presence.

M. de Pomponne was induced by Nicole and Arnauld to write to the French Ambassador at Constantinople, who collected a mass of evidence as to the belief of the Orthodox Church on this point. This was printed in vol. iii. of the *Perpetuité de la Foi*, under the title *Preuves authentiques de l'Union de l'Église d'Orient avec l'Église sur l'Eucharistie.* Of course, an epigram appeared: "Arnauld avait désorienté M. Claude," a wit remarked.

"For," writes the author (Nicole or Antoine Arnauld), "it is certain that these terms of which we speak, are and have been taken for more than a thousand years in the sense of the Real Presence and in the sense of Transubstantiation. . . . It is impossible that Christians of the first six centuries could have understood these words in another sense."

The first two volumes are both occupied with agreement between Greek and Roman, the Eastern and Western Churches. The third volume is devoted to the examination of the allegation that the Church has changed her teaching since 870.

It is not probable that the author convinced Claude; but the great point is that there has never been innovation of doctrine. Doctrines may have been more fully formulated later, but not originated.

Nicole also wrote several books against the Reformed faith—*Préjugés légitimes contre les Calvinistes, Prétendus Réformes convaincus de schisme, L'Unité de l'Église.*

Another memorable figure is that of M. de Pontchâteau. He is of all the Messieurs and friends and penitents (always excepting the Duchesse de Longueville) the most exalted in rank, and he is, next to M. Le Maître, the penitent who gave up most from the world's point of view. In his later years his knowledge of the world, and his almost intuitive diplomatic skill, and that *savoir faire* which is the especial talent usually possessed by persons of high rank who are in constant intercourse with the great world, all these were devoted to the service of Port Royal.

Sebastien-Joseph de Coislin du Cambout, Abbé de Pontchâteau was born in 1634; he was the third son of the Marquis de Coislin, Baron de Pontchâteau, who was the head of a distinguished Breton family.

He was related through his grandmother to the Richelieu family, and had connections with many other great people of France.

For a younger son of so great a family, benefices were plentiful, and these fell to M. de Pontchâteau's share. He came to Paris to complete his studies, and to lead the gay, amusing life of a young man of good family, the typical Abbé.

But in 1651 Port Royal influence was much felt in ecclesiastical circles. M. de Pontchâteau fell in with M. de Rebours, and through M. de Rebours with M. Singlin. A sudden conversion was the result, and a great burst of fervour, and desires for the Religious Life as led by the Solitaires of Port Royal. M. Singlin, the born director, possessed that insight into character which is so necessary for a guide of souls. He proposed something more difficult, the resignation of his irregularly obtained benefices, and a gradual withdrawal from—not only the worldly world, but the so-called religious world.

The newly awakened fervour relaxed, and for some time M. de Pontchâteau wavered. There was an attempted journey to Rome, which was cut short, and a visit to Port Royal, during which he made friends with Du Fossé, De Tillemont, and others. He drew up an account of the miracle of the Holy Thorn. Then

came a return to the world, and on these years he looked with horror when his final break with the world came. He made a sudden journey to Rome, and spent some time there, in the brilliant, corrupt society which is described in *John Inglesant*. He returned to Paris. He made up his mind to marry a young lady who was staying with his sister, the Duchesse d'Épernon. Her death put an end to that project.[1] At last, on Good Friday 1663, M. Singlin told him that it was not that he could not, but that he would not, change his life. Perhaps M. de Pontchâteau was just on the point of breaking with his rather aimless career; but, be that as it may, M. Singlin's words went home, and he went back to a small house belonging to his nephew, the Bishop of Orleans, and spent the night in meditation on those words. He was resolved at last no longer to dally with the danger of being of those who make "il gran rifiuto." In the early morning he wrote some letters, resigned his benefices, and left the house. Never did he see any of his relations again, excepting his sister, Madame d'Épernon, who herself became a nun. M. de Pontchâteau only kept a small sum of money. He sold all his pictures, and gave his library to Antoine Arnauld.

The Port Royalists sought his aid in various ways. It was he who arranged for the printing of De Saci's New Testament at Amsterdam. He also made an expedition to Nordstrandt, an island off the Danish coast. Antoine Arnauld and some others had invested their money in an enterprise for draining this poor little isle, and M. de Pontchâteau did his best to get their money back when the scheme proved unsuccessful. This affair leaked out, and rumours were spread abroad that a New Republic was about to be set up in this rather bleak and uninviting spot.

The peace of the Church enabled M. de Pontchâteau

[1] As Sainte Beuve remarks, M. de Pontchâteau could be very brutal, even in his piety. "Dieu a tué cette femme par-dessus le marché pour me sauver encore." Perhaps we may think that she was allowed to die for her own sake!

to make his home at Port Royal. He took the name of M. Mercier and became the gardener, working very diligently, wearing the coarsest clothes, and spending many hours in prayer.

The Mère du Fargis was a great friend of his, and indeed it was to her prayers that he himself attributed his final conversion. All the hard and disagreeable work, even to digging graves, was done by him, and for lighter occupation he copied out the writings of M. Hamon and M. de St Cyran.

There is something a little grim, a little forbidding about M. de Pontchâteau; he fights so terribly hard against pride of birth; he is so conscious that that sin must be his temptation. He had, it is to be supposed, to suffer for the long years of dallying with the world, and to find himself pursued by the temptations of the world, even at Port Royal.

We shall find him, when the peace is finally broken, still serving the cause of the oppressed. He retired to a monastery in Luxembourg, but made a journey to Rome on behalf of Port Royal, and also visited Antoine Arnauld; in fact he frequently travelled about "for the cause"; he died in 1690, when on a visit to Nicole, who tells us that his death was very peaceful, and who was rightly vexed by the determination of the populace to treat him as a saint. He was buried at Port Royal, his relations doing him all the honour they could in death; it was not their fault that they had been so much separated in life.

For there must have been much that was lovable in M. de Pontchâteau; his own people were attached to him, and he had many friends. He is not the most attractive of the Solitaires; in fact he had a large share of the most unlovely qualities of a one-sided development of religious life. But what was wrong was not the fault of religion, but of his moral incapacity to rise to the greatest heights of saintliness.

The person who has put self first from childhood is slow to learn that the condition of loving God is that of loving his brother also. M. de Pontchâteau did learn

it, no doubt, but in a one-sided manner. The brutal word quoted in a footnote gives us the key to what was wanting in him. He never got much beyond the desire to "faire *son* salut," at least so it would seem.

We must also mention one who has contributed to the fame of Port Royal—Racine. It was during these peaceful years that the most distinguished pupil of the Port Royal Schools—Racine—made his peace with the representatives of Port Royal, his aunt, the Mère de Sainte Thècle, and Antoine Arnauld and Nicole.

Jean Racine was born at Ferté Milon (a small place in the Île de France) in 1639. His family seems to have belonged to the *bourgeoisie*. Left an orphan at a very early age, he was brought up by his grandparents, Jean Racine and Marie des Moulins. The grandfather died when the boy was only ten, and it was on his grandmother that he lavished all his boyish affection. It was in the house of a relation of his, M. Vitart, that the "Solitaires" found their first refuge, as we have already seen. And Racine's grandmother also retired to Port Royal, where Racine often visited; for even at Port Royal, as a recent biographer remarks, "a grandmother is always a grandmother!"

Racine himself was received at Port Royal in one of the *Petites Écoles* in 1655, and probably the Port Royalists took him as a favour, for he was sixteen, and the general rule was only to take small boys.

M. Gustave Larroumet points out in his excellent little book on Racine, how admirably the Port Royal system of education suited Racine's temperament: the individual treatment, the gentleness and humanity of his masters, the excellence of their teaching, and—what was really a priceless boon—the introduction he received to the, at that time, almost unknown treasures of Greek literature.

He was familiar with the Bible, and his Port Royalist masters made him a true scholar; he was steeped in classical literature. He used to wander in the woods around Port Royal repeating the works of Sophocles and Euripides, which he had learned by

heart. He displeased our old friend Claude Lancelot, who found him reading a Greek romance which the Port Royal masters had not edited. Lancelot threw the book into the fire; it was *Theogenes and Chariclea.* This happened again, but Racine brought the third copy of the book, and told Lancelot to do as he liked with it for he (Racine) now knew it by heart. But still Racine was a pious boy, and he made various translations of the Office hymns in the Breviary.

Oddly enough, M. de Saci saw no beginnings of poetic talent in the young Racine.

After three years Racine went to Paris to study philosophy, and soon attracted royal notice by an ode which he composed on the Coronation of Louis XIV.

He not unnaturally revolted against the discipline of Port Royal, and probably he rebelled still more at the Port Royal attitude to life, to the world, to poetry. He made an ineffectual attempt to study theology under the direction of an uncle who was settled in Uzès, Languedoc, and returned to Paris, where he formed his lifelong friendship with Boileau, and began the life of a poet, an artist, a writer of plays. Of course, Port Royal in general and his aunt in particular, mourned bitterly, and Racine's life for a while was not edifying.

But his worst sin was his ingratitude, the unkindness of his letters about his old masters who had shown him nothing but kindness. Of course they had been provoking, and Nicole's words about writers of plays and romances are exasperating: "A writer of romances and of dramas is a public poisoner, not of the bodies but of the souls of the faithful." Alas, alas, how often are these words true:—"Thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece," and the sons of Zion are not always in the right.

Racine's reply was a *chef d'œuvre* of wickedness and wit, and of it Nicole says, "M. Larroumet attacked with a heavy axe, Racine replied with a dagger."

And M. Larroumet justly remarks that the "Solitaires" must have had faults, as they were human beings.

Racine knew them intimately; he knew their weak points.

Racine had some excuse; he had received great provocation and he was young, but his letter is a blot on his fame, and he leaves the moral question out of the discussion altogether. Boileau, ever a good friend, restrained him from publishing a second letter. "You don't consider," he said, "that you are attacking the most upright people that exist."

Years afterwards, when Racine had most bitterly repented, he was twitted with his first letter. "It is the most shameful episode of my career," he replied. "I would give my life to efface it." The second epistle was not destroyed, and was printed after Racine's death.

For ten years the rupture with Port Royal was complete, and no wonder, considering the bitter words quite in the manner of the *Provincial Letters*, with cruel anecdotes about Mère Angélique's supposed inhospitality to religious who begged a shelter, and gibes at M. Le Maître, whose kindness, not to say tenderness to "le petit Racine," as M. Le Maître called him, had been so great, and who had done him no manner of wrong; the Port Royalists said nothing in reply, and left Racine severely alone.

Racine's career was one unbroken success for some years: a discussion of his plays is not part of our plan, but it is certainly remarkable that the perfection of prose in Pascal and the perfection of poetic style in Racine both emanated from Port Royal.

But evil days fell on Racine: his play, *Phèdre*, the finest of his tragedies, was nearly ruined by a spiteful woman, one of the decadent members of the once admirable society of the Hôtel Rambouillet. Racine was drawn into miserable quarrels, and began to feel that all was vanity and vexation.

Probably what finally determined him to cease writing, or perhaps took from him the power to write, was a bitter grief; he was betrayed by a woman he loved.

And he turned back again to the memories of Port Royal, which return showed that his resentment and rancour were not very deep.[1]

He wrote to his aunt, Mère de Saint Thècle, and she who had never ceased to pray for him, no doubt gave him the help which he needed; he paid a visit to Nicole, and as Louis Racine, the poet's son, says, "M. Nicole, who did not even know what was meant by war, received him with open arms."

Antoine Arnauld was rather formidable. He bitterly resented Racine's words about Mère Angélique. But the ever faithful friend Boileau, who had become a friend of Arnauld, took *Phèdre* to the Doctor, who drew from it an edifying moral to the effect that, if we are deprived of God there is no excess into which we cannot fall. Of course Racine could venture to call on Arnauld after this, and the reconciliation was complete.

Racine's penitence was very real; he resolved to write no more, and to become a "religious," but his confessor, a wise and prudent person, advised him to marry, which he did—one Catherine de Romanet, a daughter of an honourable house and a well-dowered maiden. She had no literary tastes whatsoever, though one of her sons had, and terrified his father thereby.

Racine wrote one of his finest plays, *Athalie*, and also *Esther*, in his retirement, and a delightful short history of Port Royal; he and Boileau were appointed historiographers to the King, and neither of the poets was ever afraid when evil days fell on Port Royal to speak the truth to the King.

Racine's little history of Port Royal Boileau thought "the most perfect fragment of history in our language," and after two centuries the judgment seems to us still most true. Racine's attachment to Port Royal cost him Louis XIV.'s favour; but he was not, so to speak, publicly disgraced, and death restored him in 1699 to the King's good graces.

[1] Sainte Beuve says: "Toute sa déviation, toutes ses erreurs selon les vues nouvelles dont s'illuminait son esprit, venaient de sa rupture avec ces Messieurs."

He died in September 1699, and was buried by his own desire in Port Royal, at M. Hamon's feet.

In spite of many and great faults, M. Larroumet is surely right when he says :—

"Peu de caractères et de génies sont de qualité aussi fine et aussi forte, aussi noble et aussi pure.

"Ce grand homme était un homme, et ce grand poète un homme de lettres.

"Mais il n'y a guère d'écrivains qui, avec les défauts inséparables de notre nature et de sa profession, offrent autant à admirer et aussi peu à blâmer."[1]

And M. Lemaître in his beautiful "Discours," *Racine et Port Royal*, says :—

"Cette vie si vraiment humaine, si pleine de belles larmes et de faiblesses et d'héroïsme. . . . Port Royal l'encadre et la pénètre toute. . . .

"Non seulement Port Royal le nourrit et après vingt ans de séparation, le recueille, le purifie et l'apaise ; mais encore c'est la description de l'homme naturel selon Port Royal qui compose le fond solide et fait l'énergie secrète de ses mélodieuses tragédies. En sorte qu'on peut dire que le théâtre de Racine est la fleur profane et imprévue du grand travail de méditation religieuse et de perfectionnement intérieur qui s'est accompli il y a deux siècles, dans ce jardin, parmi les ruines où ont battu de si fermes cœurs—honneur austère de notre race, comme Racine en est à jamais l'honneur charmant.[2]

[1] M. Larroumet's book is in the series, "*Les Grands Écrivains Français*" (Hachette).

[2] Discours prononcé a Port Royal le 25 Avril 1899.

CHAPTER XX

THE FINAL DESTRUCTION OF PORT ROYAL (1679-1713)

We now enter on the most painful part of the story of Port Royal. For more than thirty years the unfortunate Community, and all persons connected with it, underwent a persecution which hardly ever ceased, and which was at once malignant and hypocritical. It is a great temptation to end the story of Port Royal at the peace of the Church, but that is impossible, for the story does not end there, and we must own that the persecution set on foot by Louis XIV. was throughly successful. The movement was stopped. Port Royal ceased to exist. Although a sect of Jansenists lingers in Holland, Port Royal—*our* Port Royal—was blotted out of existence.

Perhaps the movement or impulse had seeds of inherent weakness—perhaps, as we have said, there was too much individualism, too much of a controversial spirit, for any lasting effects. On the whole, however, we feel that it was not so; that had the peace of the Church not been broken, had the King not been determined to crush all independent thought, the French Church might have been stronger, and better able to withstand Voltaire and that which came after Voltaire—the Revolution. Port Royal was an attempt, writes Renan, "faire de la France une nation instruite, honnête, ayant souci du vrai."

Renan's praise may not incline some of us to think more highly of Port Royal, but his judgment is certainly true, that "Port Royal est un des premiers titres de gloire de la France. C'est la meilleure preuve que

l'on puisse opposer à ceux qui soutiennent que notre pays est incapable de sérieux." [1]

The year of Madame de Longueville's death is generally fixed on as the time when the temporary truce was broken, but there had already been mutterings of the storm. The Bishop of Angers and some of the clergy, particularly the University, had never been able to agree, and there were mutual recriminations. And, most unhappily, there was an appeal to the King, which drew from that monarch, then in camp in Flanders, a decree called l'Arrêt du Camp de Ninove. This was to the effect that the permission to sign the formulary with explanations was only given out of the King's intense kindness for weak consciences.

Of course this altered the aspect of affairs; and it was, as the saintly Bishop of Grenoble wrote to M. de Pontchâteau, "a terrible misfortune that M. d'Angers had not managed better." His letters are full of common sense; he desires much that Port Royalists should remain quiet; he wishes that no disputes should arise, especially now "when this question of Jansenism is dead."

Then Nicole got into trouble, and dragged Antoine Arnauld with him.

The Bishop of Arras and the Bishop of Saint Pons resolved to write a letter to the newly elected Pope (Innocent XI.), and bring to his notice some propositions of casuistry which they thought to be scandalous. They begged Nicole to translate their letter into Latin, for he was a most elegant Latinist. The letter was then to be sent to the French Bishops for their signature, but while this was being done the Court was informed; the King was angry, and decreed that the letter should not be sent. It was sent, however, bearing several episcopal signatures, and was carried to Rome by M. de Pontchâteau.

Then the King turned on M. de Pomponne and told him to write to his uncle Antoine Arnauld, and admonish him severely. Arnauld, who had nothing

[1] *Nouvelles Études Religieuses.*

whatever to do with the affair, justified himself, but the Bishop of Arras, with extraordinary bad faith, denied that he had had any part in the letter. Again Arnauld had to write to M. de Pomponne, and this letter is a most admirable and dignified account of the whole affair and how it arose.

No further harm was done, but another "bruit" incensed Louis, and made him eager to put an end to these annoyances, and we must notice that these beginnings of persecution came entirely from the King; for the Popes Innocent XI. and Innocent XII. were both favourable to the Port Royalists, and not at all disposed to permit the lowered moral standard which had been set up in various quarters. M. de Harlai de Champvallon, Archbishop of Rouen, who succeeded M. de Péréfixe, Archbishop of Paris, was an able person, with winning manners, and no principles except those of ambition. S. Simon sketches him admirably.[1]

The Archbishop had never been able to induce Madame de Longueville to be more than barely civil to him; he had heard that Antoine Arnauld had written of him as "un ministre de l'Anti-Christ," so that he had no prepossessions in favour of Port Royal.[2]

Madame de Longueville died in April 1679. Louis XIV. had restrained his dislike to the Community solely on account of the regard he really felt for his cousin. Her brother, the great Condé, one day said something about Port Royal to the King during the later days of persecution, and was told that it had only been on account of his sister that the delay in the proceedings against Port Royal had been allowed.

"What your Majesty does, is always well done," answered the Prince, "but it is just possible that in this matter your Majesty has not been told the real truth of things." The King was silent.

[1] See Appendix, Note VII.

[2] But in reality, according to Mère Angélique de St Jean, Antoine Arnauld had only quoted a passage from St Jerome to the effect that often the Ministers of Christ are in the service of Anti-Christ.

Three weeks after Madame de Longueville's death, M. de Pomponne was sent by the King to M. Arnauld, who was told by his nephew that the King wished him to know that his Majesty did not approve of the meetings which had been held at Madame de Longueville's, at which M. Arnauld had been so often present; that Arnauld was not to set up any gatherings in his lodgings; in short, he was to have no particular friends, and to avoid peculiarities.

It is really difficult to believe Louis XIV. could have cared for such extraordinarily small details. The great King, master of Europe as he was, waging war on a convent and a small and harmless circle of elect souls! Oddly enough, the Monastery of St Cyran suffered; the name recalled the great Abbé. M. de Barcos had died in 1678, and only a few monks were left, Lancelot among them. He was obliged to retire to Quimperlé in Brittany. He lived until 1695. "Our dear M. Lancelot has gone to God," was written about him at the time of his death. His last words were from Psalm cxviii. (cxix. in our version): "Vide humilitatem meam, et eripe me: quia legem tuam non sum oblitus," which indeed seem to sum up the whole of his beautiful and innocent life. The Abbey of St Cyran was suppressed.

The Archbishop now prepared to visit Port Royal, and sent one of his officials, the Abbé Fromageau, to collect some information.

Angélique de St Jean, now a woman of fifty-five years of age, had been elected Abbess in the place of the Mère du Fargis, who had been elected three times in succession. M. Fromageau arrived on one of the Rogation Days in May, and had a very long conversation with the Abbess, and asked many questions as to the numbers of the nuns, and of the pupils (pensionnaires). There were at that time seventy-three choir Sisters, twenty lay Sisters, two novices, a few postulants, and forty-two pupils. The Abbé spoke pleasantly about the education given at Port Royal.

But Angélique was not deceived; she must have remembered the days of 1661, and she inquired what

lay concealed underneath all this civility. "Madame," said the Abbé, "what can you fear under so mild a rule as now prevails? The King loves peace, the Archbishop dislikes any sort of disturbance, and always manages things gently, and there is nothing more that I need to ask you."

Did L'Abbé Fromageau know that what he said was entirely untrue? we hope not. He went on to praise the Port Royalists generally, and spoke of the Princesse de Conti, and of the sorrow he had felt when she died.

A few days passed away, and then the Archbishop arrived himself, not to give his blessing as a Pastor on the holy house, but to let loose terror and desolation therein. He arrived at 9 A.M. on the 17th May. M. de Saci, who was staying at Port Royal, was called to receive the illustrious visitor. The Archbishop was almost overwhelmingly polite. He began by telling De Saci how entirely satisfied both he and the King were with *his* conduct, and after some more civilities begged that the Abbess might be asked to come to him. Without further preliminaries, de Harlai launched this thunderbolt at her. "It was the King's will," said he, that she should send away all the postulants and the "pensionnaires," and that as his Majesty had decided that the number of the Community must be reduced to fifty choir and twelve lay Sisters, no more postulants must be received at present.

Angélique had all the dignity of the first Mère Angélique, and perhaps even more *savoir faire.* She replied that, as the King's orders had been sent to her by the Archbishop, there was nothing to say. M. de Paris again assured her of his extreme sympathy, and his great regard for the Community, and as the present postulants had been accepted for the noviciate by the Community, they might remain; "on n'avait qu'à aller son train," he said both to her and to Mademoiselle de Vertus.

Again Angélique asked if there was anything to which people could reasonably object in the education which the Community gave. Quite the contrary, he

assured her, nowhere else was there to be found such excellent training. Not one word was said as to sending away the present confessors, but when Mlle. de Vertus came in and Angélique went out, M. de Paris told her that he really could not make up his mind to say anything to the Abbess on that subject.

As he was preparing to depart he turned to M. de Saci and said: "Oh, by the by, it is the King's pleasure that neither you nor any of the other ecclesiastics remain here, you must go away before a fortnight is over."

One of the Sisters passed away just at this time, and on her breast the Sisters laid this touching appeal:—

"We appeal to Thy tribunal, Lord Jesus. The judges of the earth refuse to listen to the most righteous complaints, for they fain would work iniquity without contradiction; but Thou art Thyself our Righteousness, and Thou wilt bestow on us mercy and justice; punishing us for not having responded with enough gratitude to the infinite grace Thou hast poured upon us, and yet Thou wilt acknowledge us, because we have suffered an unrighteous persecution for the sake of Thy truth and Thy grace; for it is because of these that the world hates us. Hearken, Lord, to our complaints, look upon the tears of these many children who are torn from our arms, keep them in Thine; suffer not the enemy to have advantage over them, nor to triumph because they have been taken from us. Keep us in Thy truth, make us immovable in the bond of love. Change our sadness into joy and grant Thy peace, and a happy rest to our dear sister, whom we have charged to lay our prayers and our complaints at Thy Feet.

"Ah, favoured soul, so lately delivered from the snare of the hunters by a special providence of God, bless His goodness, and bear witness to thy gratitude by praying Him to extend His mercy over all this family, to whom He united thee; that it may please Him not to leave it undirected; that He will guard for it prudent and faithful Pastors, so that it may not wander away in this dark time; and that those who lay traps for souls who mount to God may not have the power to arrest any one from rising to God and abiding eternally united to Him. Amen."

The President de Guedreville, whose daughter was a pupil of Port Royal, went to see the Archbishop, and begged to know, if the education at Port Royal was good and the Community so irreproachable, why the reception of pupils was to be forbidden to Port Royal.

"It is exactly this that is the mischief," said the Archbishop. "The nuns are so good, they get talked about, they make friends through their pupils among people of quality—and so cliques and associations are formed, and the King does not like this sort of thing; and indeed these cliques are dangerous to the peace of France."

The President protested against the absurdity of these ideas; the "Messieurs de Port Royal had (to take himself for an example) always severely let him alone!"

"Oh," said the Archbishop, "these gentlemen keep up an intercourse with various foreigners; there are about two hundred people at Port Royal; and lastly, all these people cannot live on the revenues of Port Royal, so they must have private means and obtain help from outside sources, and *the King does not like it.*" Port Royal was too careless of Court favour, too much absorbed in high matters, to care anything for Louis XIV.'s smile. That was the crime. Louis XIV. simply could not understand that a number of men could live lives of prayer and work with no thought of Court favour. "Ces messieurs de Port Royal," Louis said, "non pas qu'on blâme"—(avait il soin de remarquer) "aucune de ces personnes prises isolément; au contraire, on peut dire, à considerer chacune en particulier, qu'elles sont toutes bonnes; mais lorsq'elles viennent à rallier, il s'en fait un corps sans chef."

It was really the presence of the Solitaires and the great Antoine Arnauld's connection with the Community which brought about the ruin of the monastery.

M. de Saci drew up a protest for the King, which was very moderate in tone and sufficiently convincing.

Mère Angélique wrote a full account of what happened to her uncle, the now aged Bishop of

Angers, and gave M. de Pontchâteau, the ever-faithful envoy of Port Royal, a letter to lay at the Pope's feet; in it she simply stated that since the peace of the Church there had been no complaint against Port Royal, and she pleaded that the Chief Pastor would take his trembling and persecuted sheep under his protection.

"You would never think that the same people (the Port Royal nuns) would twice in their lives see what has not been seen for several centuries.

"However, the present way of managing is more extraordinary than anything we have already experienced; I have no doubt than it is intended to go much further.

"However, they don't take any trouble to find a pretext. For when they talk of a dangerous party in the state, it is just a joke; no one can possibly believe that under the rule of a Prince who has made the whole of Europe tremble, there can be much reason to be afraid of a troop of small children and a few priests who direct a Community of nuns. . . . What is only to be seen too easily, although one does not talk about it, is that this business is the effect of the Devil's resentment, who cannot endure his banishment from a number of hearts when he rests peacefully under the shadow of those wicked maxims which rock the conscience to sleep. . . ."

The children who were sent away were overwhelmed with grief, and, what seems rather unaccountable, other convents were forbidden to receive them.

Besoigne, in his *Histoire de Port Royal*, gives a list of them, and we see well-known names: De Pomponne, De Luines, Le Maître, De Grammont, De Feuquières (who were relations of the Arnaulds). Of the postulants who returned to the world, several led so far as it was possible the life of "religious" (in the technical sense) in the world.

Besoigne also gives a complete list of the nuns.

M. de Saci and his cousin, M. d'Andilly's son, retired to Pomponne, in spite of the earnest solicitations of the faithful Fontaine, who much wished to have him

in Paris. The other priests, M. de Tillemont, M. Bourgeois, M. Borel, and M. Ruth d'Ans, all had to go. M. de Pontchâteau also went away. Some of the Solitaires still remained—M. Hamon, and M. Charles who had been the Port Royal gardener for forty years. M. de Saci came back for a few days, and finally retired; his sister-in-law, Madame Le Maître,[1] was dying, and did die in a few days. M. de Sainte Marthe lingered on; for there were no priests at all at Port Royal, and the Prioress, the Mère du Fargis, was very ill. In vain did her niece, the Duchesse de Lesdiguières, and the Cardinal de Retz try to induce the King to allow M. de Sainte Marthe to remain. Madame de Lesdiguières' letter shows the consideration in which the Mère du Fargis was held.

Antoine Arnauld had not waited for any more royal commands; he began again the life of exile which was only terminated by his death.

His own words on his exile are very fine. We may quote a short passage:—

"Thou accomplishest the words of the Gospel, and Thou makest Thine own to find instead of those whom they have left, fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, who are inspired with such tender love for those who suffer for the Truth, . . . that by a strange kindness Thou changest the cross laid on them into kindnesses and consolations. . . . I am ready, O God, to follow Thee whithersoever it pleases Thee to lead me; and when I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death I will fear nothing, for thou holdest me by Thine Hand."

How deep is the true underlying unity of Christian souls. How many generations have stayed themselves on the thought of the rod and staff and the green pastures and still waters through which the Good Shepherd leads and will lead His own for ever!

Arnauld might easily have taken refuge in Rome for the Pope, Innocent XI., was favourable to him, and it is not impossible that a Cardinal's hat might have

[1] The wife of M. Le Maître de Sainte Elme.

been within his reach. With true high-mindedness, he reflected that as the relations between France and the Papal Court were decidedly strained, it was the part of an ever-loyal subject not to go to Rome.[1] He betook himself to Flanders, leaving Paris on the 17th June 1679, and telling no one but his beloved niece, the Mère Angélique de St Jean, of his plans.

Arnauld took up his abode at Mons, and wrote an admirable letter to the Archbishop; he says that as his enemies (who for the last forty years have never ceased to slander him) have persuaded the King that the visits of relations and friends and of people who came to consult him in religious difficulties—as these visits are so suspicious, no change of abode would be of much use. And he goes on to say that the old and absolutely false accusations as to his errors about penitence and grace could never have imposed on any theologian; and subsequent events proved how false they were. The whole letter breathes a spirit of calm dignity, of lofty independence, of perfect respect for the King without undue subservience, and there is a slight touch of sarcasm in the words in which he asks, "Who can imagine that the fear of the supposed intrigues of a simple theologian, destitute alike of property and of protection, and whose twenty-four years of retirement have made him absolutely unfit to undertake plots against the state—who could have thought these things could occupy the mind of so great a King?"

"He does hope that perhaps the King may learn his mistake, and may do justice to Port Royal, in which case he [Arnauld] will gladly sacrifice the best consolation a man can hope for—that of living among his friends and dying in their arms."

Few men have ever shown a more Christian temper under persecution than the "great Arnauld." Truly he too might have said with another illustrious exile, "I have loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore I die in exile."

[1] See Appendix, Note VIII.

Arnauld also wrote a respectful but dignified letter to Louis XIV. himself, but M. de Pomponne thought, and probably quite rightly, that it would not be presented, as Arnauld, with the generosity of his noble soul, spoke not for himself only but for his friends, "ce que *nous* sommes," etc. "That is exactly what cannot be tolerated," wrote the doubtless distracted De Pomponne;[1] "it is just what they don't want—these societies and associations."

But to return to Port Royal: how to replace the confessors was no small difficulty. The Superior was a certain M. Grenet, the parish priest of S. Benoit, in Paris, or rather one of the priests thereof, for the church was served by a Chapter of Canons.

He was a good man, but not one of "les nôtres," and the Archbishop felt that neither Grenet nor he were highly thought of by the Sisters. "We are nothing at all; they don't care for anyone but 'ces messieurs,'" and indeed, as M. Sainte Beuve says, Grenet lacked the peculiar "cachet" of that holy race of Port Royal.

Grenet in vain tried to intervene, and to find a good confessor, and without much success. The good physician, Hamon, was the only comfort they had. As time went on, there was an uncomfortable feeling that the Archbishop had further designs. In 1680 he was reported to have said that a few frogs still croaked in the Port Royal marshes, but only a little sunlight was needed to dry them up. There was a great idea that the two Abbeys of Port Royal de Paris and Port Royal des Champs might be united, and every sort of effort was made to persuade the Abbess of the Paris house to resign; Mère Angélique had friends at Rome, and to them she wrote—they in their turn told the Pope, and again Angélique appealed to him, and begged him to watch over the souls of those delivered over to death.

The Pope did not receive this letter, but the design came to nothing.

[1] M. de Pomponne was abruptly dismissed from the King's service in November 1679, but was recalled in 1691.

Still the vexations and "tracasseries" at Port Royal des Champs were unceasing.

M. Poligné, the new confessor, preached the doctrine of blind obedience, and treated the Abbess in a most insolent and unbecoming manner. And on Good Friday, 1680, he preached an extraordinary sermon, in which he furiously denounced the poor Sisters and compared them to the heretics of all and every past age—Arians, Donatists, Pelagians, Calvinists. Mère Angélique was not a person who could be treated in this way; and a remonstrance from her to M. de Harlai effected the removal of M. Poligné. With him was associated a certain M. l'Hermite, who was an unobjectionable person, with no particular gifts and perhaps no great depth of spirituality, but who at any rate was good and pious.

After most wearisome delays, two novices had been professed by M. Grenet, the Superior acting for the Archbishop, on the fifth Sunday after Easter, 26th May 1680. These were the very last Sisters who were ever professed in that holy and pious Community.

Their names were Françoise de St Agathe le Juge and Marie Catherine de Sainte Celinie Benoise. They deserve a word of remembrance; what courage, what resolution must it not have needed to join once and for all their fortunes to Port Royal! With what sinking hearts must not the two Mothers, Angélique de St Jean and Mère du Fargis, have bestowed the kiss of peace and welcomed the new Sisters! Indeed the pious historian Besoigne seems himself inclined to doubt the wisdom of the proceeding, but he was writing long after the final agony, and, after all, how could these novices have been refused? and are there not some causes with which it is better to fail, so far as the world is concerned, than to forsake them?

"Monseigneur," writes the Mère Angélique, who really seems to us to rise to as great heights of moral dignity as did ever her illustrious aunt—"I would not allow myself to interrupt you in the important occupations of your office, did I not know that M. Grenet, who

is kind enough to take charge of this letter, must speak to you of us, and also that as we are a small portion of your flock, you will sacrifice a few moments in order to inform yourself of the condition of this Community. The time he has spent here [M. Grenet had been able to stay two months at Port Royal] has made him perfectly acquainted with us, and I have no doubt, Monseigneur, that he will fully make known to you our deep gratitude for the proofs you have given us of your fairness in two important matters" [the dismissal of M. Poligné, and the Profession].

She goes on to say that, as the Archbishop had told them to wait, they had done so, "but," she continues, "Monseigneur, may we venture to ask 'till when?' We are so insignificant (si peu de chose) that it is very easy to forget us altogether, unless we speak. May we not show you that we have suffered for a long time? God gives us freedom to complain to Him, and we do it very often, for He is not wearied by our tears. For, indeed, our tears are not on account of temporal possessions, which should be neither loved nor regretted, but for the souls Jesus Christ has loved so much."

In another letter she says :—

"We have need of each other. Forgive this word of freedom: I mean it in this sense . . . that as we cannot belong to the flock of Jesus Christ unless we yield you respect and obedience, . . . no more can you exercise the ministry which He has entrusted to you save by feeding His Sheep and His Lambs, which are the true riches of true Pastors."

It is possible that the biographers of the great Port Royalists, always excepting Sainte Beuve, have not done justice to the second Angélique. She has certainly even greater intellectual gifts than the first, and it seems, as one reads the record of this second persecution, that the once somewhat dogmatic and somewhat argumentative Angélique of 1661-1664 has become a saint, clear-headed and intellectual as of old, but with more spirituality and tenderness. She had grown and ripened.

The following October, the Archbishop sent M. Le Moine, who was highly recommended by priests of Saint Louis en l'Ile. M. de Paris spoke with great openness to M. Le Moine, and told him to try his best to subjugate Port Royal. For some three months all went on well; M. Le Moine was a holy priest, and he was happy at Port Royal. But one morning in February 1681, just as he had said his Mass, a messenger arrived with orders that M. Le Moine was to go straight to St Germain. And when he arrived there he was closely questioned by M. de Châteauneuf, M. de Pomponne's successor as Secretary of State. It appeared that M. Le Moine had been the medium through which a large sum of money had been conveyed to the Bishop of Pamiers, when he was in disgrace and poverty. Probably the friend who effected this was M. des Touches, who had been one of the "Solitaires" at St Cyran. And M. Le Moine, in addition to the crime of aiding a good work, had also been director of the Seminary at Alet. M. Le Moine was sent off to his own diocese, and was not allowed even to say a hasty farewell to his beloved Port Royal; in leaving it, he wrote, he felt he was leaving an earthly Paradise.

One fact is to the credit of Louis XIV. There was actually a question of a *lettre de cachet* for M. Le Moine (he had been threatened with the Bastille for refusing to say who had sent him the money). The King said: "It shall never be said that anyone was sent to the Bastille for bestowing alms."

But the Archbishop was destined to make a worse mistake, and that was the appointment of M. Le Tourneux, the friend of M. du Fossé, one of the real, true confessors of Port Royal.

Before this, however, there had been deep anxiety at Port Royal as to the election of their Abbess. Long ago, we remember Mère Angélique had made these elections triennial. Angélique de St Jean had just completed her three years, and it was needful either to re-elect her or to choose another Abbess. Mère

Angélique wrote to the Archbishop's Secretary, asking him to fix a day at his convenience for the election, so that he could be present. In reply, she was told that the Archbishop needed some days for deliberation.

The unfortunate Community were in an agony of supense, and poured out their hearts in never-ceasing intercessions. The Duc de Roannez did his best; he went to see the Archbishop, who assured him that it really was not his intention to alarm the nuns, and that the election might go on; it had really been want of leisure which had prevented his attending to the affair. Whether this was true it is impossible to say—probably not.

Port Royal had still plenty of friends in high places, and a letter was sent to this effect: "Joy, joy, your election can be made to-morrow." The election did take place, and Mère Angélique was re-elected. She wrote a grave letter of thanks to M. de Paris, begging him to remember that the Community had still no adequate director.

The Duc de Roannez and Mademoiselle de Vertus used all the interest they possessed to induce the Archbishop to appoint fresh confessors, and after wearisome correspondence, M. Le Tourneux was asked by the Archbishop himself to go to Port Royal for a time.

And M. Le Tourneux was not only a spiritual guide of the school of M. de St Cyran and the rest; he was also a considerable preacher.

Nicholas Le Tourneux was born at Rouen, of poor parents, in 1640. Like many another boy who in later years has become a preacher, he loved to "play at preaching," and his juvenile performances attracted great attention. That excellent M. Gentien Thomas du Fossé had had entrusted to him a sum of money which was to be employed in educating poor children who showed signs of vocation for Holy Orders. Nicholas attracted his attention, and was sent to Paris to the Jesuits' College; he was a great success. Here he made the acquaintance of the Chancellor Tellier's two boys, one destined to be in after years Louis XIV.'s

War Minister, and the other to be Archbishop of Rheims. The Chancellor did not forget Le Tourneux. The boy, after finishing his philosophical studies, stayed for some time in Touraine with a good priest, and then returned to Rouen and took Holy Orders at the early age of twenty-two, for which he had to obtain a dispensation.

Du Fossé, in those delightful Memoirs of his, tells us how the young ecclesiastic, who had nothing in his appearance to recommend him, became a noted preacher in a very short time. He was one of those preachers who go straight to men's consciences. Du Fossé says that he heard a sermon soon after his return from the Bastille, which was fresh in his mind as he wrote his Memoirs thirty years afterwards.

Le Tourneux took up his abode in Paris with Pierre du Fossé (the author of the Memoirs) and M. de Tillemont, for he too was possessed with the desire to renew his conversion, to "faire pénitence."

He thus became acquainted with De Saci and the great Arnauld; and Du Fossé says he wonders that they did not send Le Tourneux back to Rouen to work for God in the Vineyard of the Lord. But these great spiritual guides knew their "*métier*"; they knew how much a period of retirement can do for the individual soul, and thus for the whole Church. Le Tourneux had a great affection for Du Fossé, and used to entreat him to correct what he (Le Tourneux) wrote. Du Fossé, who undoubtedly had the gift of literary expression, and was held in great esteem by all "*les nôtres*," modestly says that there was not much to correct.

Le Tourneux began to preach again in 1671; M. de Saci, who was his director, had not kept him long in retirement. M. du Fossé's mother about this time came to live with him in Paris, and a certain "*Maître des Requêtes*," M. Vazet, persuaded Le Tourneux to live in his house, and here Le Tourneux began the series of devotional books which can still be read with intense edification. Madame du Fossé placed herself under his direction, as did many another.

He became known as a preacher, and Louis XIV. one day asked Boileau who was this preacher after whom everyone was running. "Sire," replied the poet, "your Majesty knows people always run after anything new; he's a preacher who preaches the Gospel"; and then he added that "Le Tourneux frightened people so much when he got into the pulpit, they wished he would go down again, but when he began they were frightened lest he should go down."

He does not seem to have been so very ugly: probably he was only insignificant.

Du Fossé gives us a few extracts from his sermons preached in a celebrated Lent course of 1682, which really show an extraordinary depth of spirituality, and of effort to draw people to the knowledge of "Christ in them, and they in Christ," which is the secret of a true conversion.

Le Tourneux's books are, as we have said, excellent. The one on the Sacraments is a complete manual of what a Christian should know and believe about them.

We will quote a few passages :—

On Confirmation.—"The fullness of the Holy Spirit is thus the peculiar effect of Confirmation, and the result of this fullness is an inward strength which makes a Christian not ashamed to confess the name of Jesus Christ by his actions."

The Eucharist.—"We must not imagine that Jesus Christ is in the Eucharist in the way in which our bodies are in a certain place. He is there, in a way that we cannot understand, and that it is not necessary that we should understand. The Church says He is there in a Sacramental way, so that He can be present in many places at once."

Le Tourneux says that the proper time for making one's Communion is after the Priest's Communion. And no one should communicate without hearing Mass first. (Of course he is speaking of people who come to Church, not the sick.)

L'Année Chrétienne is a wonderful treasury of solid piety.

He says (we can only give a few quotations) that to enter the Church is to enter God's family, and to be of His servants is to be not slaves, but children.

The meditations for the Epistle and Gospel for Christmas Day are particularly excellent. The one on the Gospel is most beautiful in its fervour. As he meditates on the concluding words, he says: "He is full of truth, for it is through Him we are freed from error. He is full of truth, because He has fulfilled by his Incarnation all the promises of God, the words of prophets, the types of the law. He is full of truth to teach us, full of grace to enable us to do what He teaches. By His truth, which dispels the darkness of our ignorance, He is our light. By His grace, which heals the corruption of our hearts, He is our life." And there follows a fervent prayer.

In his book, *De la Meilleure Manière d'entendre la Sainte Messe*, he sets forth how desirable it is that the faithful should understand the Mass, and the meaning of all that is done in Church, for Christians are treated as the friends and children of God; what he wishes to impress on Christians is that they are to offer a "reasonable service."

And for a very brief period this saint of God was allowed the privilege of directing, instructing, encouraging the Port Royal Community.

This was a respite: M. Le Tourneux was greatly esteemed in Paris by all the really good people, and he seemed to be not disliked by the principalities and powers of the world. Alas, only for a short time; yet who could wish Le Tourneux's fate to have been otherwise? During that Lent of 1682, M. de Saci was actually allowed by the King himself (it seems hardly credible that even Louis XIV. could have cared so much for details) to visit Port Royal, and help Mademoiselle de Vertus, who was ill. A poor dying nun had the unspeakable comfort of receiving the last Sacraments from his hands. She had dreamt one night

that she found M. de Saci administering the Sacraments to her, and she was sure that this would come to pass, as it did.[1]

M. Le Tourneux was not left in peace very long; there were influences at work against him, and Arnauld, in one of his letters, speaks of a seizure of his own books, and that he fears M. Le Tourneux may be implicated.[2] M. Le Tourneux retired to a priory in Picardy, which the Archbishop of Rouen had bestowed on him, and gave himself up entirely to prayer and study. He published the first two volumes of *L'Année Chrétienne.* It was much attacked on trivial grounds by those who hated anything or anyone remotely connected with Port Royal, and most vexatious and petty complaints were made by the Archbishop. M. Le Tourneux wrote calmly and respectfully, but as *L'Année Chrétienne* was attacked, he came to Paris in 1686. Here he was struck by apoplexy. He was only forty-six when he passed away. His heart was carried to Port Royal.

He is, although he was so short a time in any real connection with Port Royal, one of the true race thereof, and in happier days he would have been an adequate successor to M. de Saci. He had a great gift. He could really explain and comment on Holy Scripture, and he probably did for the Christian world of France a work similar to that which Bishop Gore did for us in England some years ago.

Le Tourneux and M. de Saci, and some of the others of Port Royal, wished to create an intelligent Christian laity, to make them understand the Mass, the Offices, the Holy Scriptures. Alas, alas, that such aims should have been frustrated!

To return to our sad history. From this time it is only a necrology which we have to relate. As no more professions were allowed, the numbers gradually diminished.

On the departure of M. Le Tourneux, the Arch-

[1] See *Vies Interessantes.*

[2] Arnauld speaks of this at some length in two of his letters of October 1682.

bishop consented to appoint M. Eustace, Curé of Frêsnes, in the Diocese of Rouen; he was a good priest, not one of the true race, but pious, and he remained for twenty-two years at Port Royal.

One after another of the great people pass away, and we feel that they are taken from the evil to come. In 1684 M. de Saci died, and Du Fossé, who loved him very much, gives us a touching account of his death, as does the ever-faithful Fontaine.

Since 1679 he had lived at Pomponne in a holy retirement, directing a few souls, and working at his Commentary on Holy Scripture.

A few days before M. de Saci's death, he had a long talk with his beloved Fontaine; he had been ill, and Fontaine had not been allowed to see him.

"As soon," writes Fontaine, "as he saw me coming into his room, he ran to me and took me in his arms. . . . and we both shed tears. . . . What, have they treated you like the rest?" he said, trying to make up to Fontaine for not having been admitted to M. de Saci's sick-room.

Then M. de Saci gave Fontaine a commission to do some translation; and they discussed the translation which De Saci was making of the Bible. De Saci spoke much of the difficulties of his task, and seemed almost to reproach himself for having tried to make his translation too elegant. Fontaine never saw his beloved friend again. On the 4th January, M. de Saci said Mass with more than usual fervour. Indeed, says one historian, as he uttered the "Agnus Dei" and the "Domine, non sum dignus," he seemed to see Him to Whom he spoke, unveiled.

After dinner he had the life of the Saint of the day (St Genévière) read aloud, and spoke with such fervour that some of those present exclaimed, "this man is not long for this world." And indeed in a very few hours M. de Saci was taken ill, and sent for his parish priest, who administered the last Sacraments to him. Then all the people at Pomponne, M. de Luzanci, and a holy widow, who having lived for many years at Port Royal

had been given an asylum at Pomponne, and others, knelt round and received his blessing. Du Fossé writes: "I could not but think of the Patriarch Jacob blessing his children. He passed away in perfect peace."

Du Fossé was not there, but hurried at once to Pomponne. In a bitter winter's night the funeral started from a church in Paris, to which the body had been carried, under the escort of two hundred men, whom the Duchesse de Lesdiguières had sent. She loved M. de Saci; he had been her spiritual guide. In the middle of a dark winter night the funeral party set out for Port Royal. All went well, and M. de Saci was laid to rest in the Chapel of our Lady. Hamon wrote his epitaph.

The great work of M. de Saci was the translation of the Bible. And besides this, he also translated the *Imitation*, and the *Homilies of St Chrysostom* on the Gospel according to St Matthew. He edited *Martial* and *Terence* for *Les petites écoles.*

He was intensely beloved by all who knew him. Du Fossé, who was under his direction, says: "His work was to teach souls to separate themselves from the love of the world and of self, and to fix themselves on God." Yet he never, Du Fossé says, laid burdens on those whom he guided.

De Saci's letters are full of common sense, of spirituality; of that deep spirituality so characteristic of Port Royal. Union with God, offering ourselves to Him, are his favourite themes. Here is a quotation:—

"It is very blessed for us when we can feel that the interests of God and our own interests are the same. For, then, really nothing happens to us except what we wish. For nothing happens save what He wills; and we only will what He wills." "In la Sua Voluntade è nostra Pace," is indeed De Saci's thought.

He speaks of the great Christian paradox, that chiefly in sorrow do we really know the peace of God.

He speaks of faults becoming a means of grace, if we will allow them to become occasions of humility.

"All," he says, "is extraordinarily simple—the joy

of All Saints' Day, the thought that Christ bears in us the burden He lays on us, the duty of almsgiving; that it is of God, who does *all* for the guidance of souls."

In a letter written to a Sister, in which he begs her to trust absolutely in God and not to dwell on her difficulties, he adds: "I think I have a right to ask you this, for you are of those I desire never to forget in my prayers."

He has some beautiful words to a Sister who is distracted by her work: "I have often thought that we pay too little attention to those years of the Life of Christ [from His twelfth to His thirtieth year]. It seems to me that those who like you are busied in holy and exterior work, should have a very special devotion to this large portion of His Life which He spent doing very ordinary things and in labour. . . . That is why His enemies called Him the carpenter's son. In order to profit by so holy an example, ponder over what St Augustine says, that all the Life of the Incarnate God on earth is to be the rule of our life, the pattern we are to imitate, and . . . so you may feel you are blessed if you are called to imitate Him in this [work], which may be more holy because it seems humble and obedient. But, then, Jesus Christ did not come only to teach men but also to help them to carry out His teaching. So, then, you must often ask Him to work *in* you; as He gives us Himself in the Holy Eucharist to live in us, to retrace in each of His members the life He once led on earth."

He then speaks of the obedience and quietness and gradual growth of this hidden life of our Lord; that all this can be true of us, "since it is Jesus Christ Himself Who, because He lives in us, calms our temper, delivers us from moods, and makes our life become in a certain degree an imitation of His own."

He tells her to remember St Paul's words about the meekness and gentleness of Jesus Christ, and that these graces must have shone forth in His hidden life, and she must ask in every Communion that Christ would form this grace in her. And she must ask this for him also.

All so simple—such advice as is given in Retreats now by those who are not seldom accused of leading souls astray, of false doctrine, just as were the Port Royalists.

He writes on marriage, how great a vocation is that of parents. The smallest words of a mother may produce the greatest possible effect on her children's minds, because God gives to them a very special blessing.

He also speaks of the duty of caring for servants.

He often refers to M. Le Tourneux.

And Angélique was soon to join him whom she mourned. On the 24th January, after praying at M. de Saci's grave for a long time, she rose from her knees in great pain, but managed to say the next Office and then retreated to bed, saying to one of the Sisters who wished to remove her veil, "Do not trouble; I want to give it up myself to Him from Whom I received it forty years ago to-morrow."

Very soon M. Hamon thought it wise that the last Sacraments should be administered, but before receiving them she said she wished to ask forgiveness of the Sisters for all her faults. The poor Mère du Fargis in an agony of tears, begged her to spare them, but Angélique persisted, and in gentlest, humblest terms, begged forgiveness for any and all her mistakes and faults.

There seemed in her none of the fear of death which had so terribly oppressed the first Mère Angélique. Perhaps the greatness of the trials through which Angélique de St Jean had been brought had lifted her up to that quiet land of peace from which the Celestial Country can be seen, and from which there are no glimpses of Doubting Castle. The Psalm she asked for after her Communion was "Benedic, anima mea, Domino."

A little later in her illness she said to the poor Sisters: "Above all, have a supreme trust in God; nothing hurtful can happen to you so long as you hope in Him."

"In Manus tuas Commendo spiritum meum."

[*To face p.* 452

On the 29th of January the soul of the last of the wonderful group of Arnauld women fled to God—in peace. She was fifty-nine.

M. Arnauld wrote a long and touching letter to the Mère du Fargis, who had resumed for the fourth time the office of Abbess. He speaks of the Community's incomparable loss, and of the sure hope they have that she prays for those she loved on earth. It is a most striking letter; he says he never likes to think that bereavements are sent as punishments, but rather that those whom God takes are, as it were, ripe for Him, and the loss may be a means of grace to us.

To the sister of Angélique de St Jean he wrote, that we must look at things from the point of view of Jesus Christ, and that it is a gain to Him when those living stones destined to form parts of the Divine Temple take their place therein at the time ordained for them by His Providence.

As we have said, Angélique de St Jean is in no way less remarkable than her two aunts. She had a strong, tender, sad soul. She is really the historian of Port Royal; to her we owe the three volumes of *Mémoires pour Servir à l'Histoire de Port Royal.*

She was a rather formidable person, and could put on a glacial manner; and she possessed the soul of a warrior. She was a disciple of Pascal; Nicole and the gentle M. de Sainte Marthe were not congenial to her.

She left three volumes of Conferences on the Rule, and there are many beautiful words in them. She is not extreme in asceticism; she wishes the food to be plain but sufficient. And there is no trace of a desire to communicate seldom.

"The Christians in the first century," she says, "communicated daily; do we not frustrate Jesus Christ's intentions for us, if we do not prepare ourselves to communicate frequently?"

She says that she would like "to take care of one or two feeble-minded children, 'des innocents,' for these can be guarded against dangers, and the Sisters who look after them must remember that Jesus has

humbled Himself to dwell in these *apparently* defective souls."

And at the end of the last Conference, when the clouds were thickening, she says: "We can only give thanks to God and quicken ourselves with joy and thankfulness, so that we may bear all that it pleases Him to send us."

Her brother, M. de Luzanci, who had retired in 1679 to Pomponne, died a few weeks later, at her brother's house in Paris (Hôtel de Pomponne). He was sixty-one; forty years had passed since he had left his soldier's life and devoted himself to the life of a Port Royal Solitaire.

Eustachie de Brégy, of whom we heard so much during the first persecution, died in March 1684, and in May the worthy Superior, M. Grenet, who had served Port Royal well and loyally, was taken from them. A. M. Taconnet replaced him, a most gentle and pious person, but he died in a few months. He was replaced by M. de la Grange.

M. Hamon, perhaps the most irreparable loss to the Community, died in 1687. We have already spoken of this perfect example of the Christian physician. He had spent thirty-seven years at Port Royal, only leaving that holy spot for short journeys, as when in 1675 he visited the Bishop of Alet, and in 1677 the celebrated Abbé de Rancé, founder of the Abbey of La Trappe. A very short time before his death, he had presided at a meeting of the Faculty of Medicine to hear a thesis read by the son of an old friend, M. Dodart. A few days after this he fell ill, watched over by this same young man, and passed away full of joy and peace.

M. Dodart told M. de Pontchâteau that he, in seeing M. Hamon die, had seen indeed how the saints die.[1]

To Port Royal he had been not only physician but spiritual guide in the worst days, and there are few more attractive portraits than the one given by Fontaine of this holy and humble man of heart.

[1] *Sainte Beuve*, vol. v., 399.

The Sister Christine Briquet, to whom we owe part of the story of the first persecution, died in 1689.

A great loss was now to fall on them.

The Abbess, the Mère du Fargis, feeling that death was drawing near, laid down her office in 1690, and Racine's aunt was elected. The Mère du Fargis, Marie de Sainte Madeleine, was born in 1618, and had been brought up by the first Mère Angélique, somewhat against her father's wishes. She belonged to one of the great families of France, but nothing was spared the young novice on that account (as we may well believe), and she herself was the most docile and gentle of people, begging that great lady, Madame de Longueville, not to treat her as a cousin, for no one in the Community knew that there was any connection between them.

We have already seen the calm dignity of the Sister in the times of persecution, and everything we hear of her points to a remarkable degree of true saintliness. She is especially and rightly afraid of anything like arrogance springing out of the spirit of resistance to tyranny, and this is significant when we remember that Racine noted that at the time of the first persecution, the Mère du Fargis and the Mère Angélique de St Jean represented two slightly different tendencies of thought at Port Royal.

She was terribly ill in her later days, and wrote some touching letters to M. Arnauld. For the last year of her life she was blind, and the historian notes how patient she was under this trial, especially as she had been fond of reading.

She is one of the true and faithful children of the first Mère Angélique, and from her extreme gentleness and a certain *cachet* of distinction which no humility could conceal, one of the most attractive of them all.

The Mère du Fargis was the last of those of Port Royal who could command any respect at Court, unless indeed we except poor Mademoiselle de Vertus, who lingered on until 1692, and to whom M. Hamon's death had been a terrible loss, for from 1681 she had been

almost entirely confined to bed. M. du Guet, the friend of Antoine Arnauld, was a great friend to her in her last years. She was the last of those whom we have called the great ladies of Port Royal.

M. de Pontchâteau died in 1690, as also did M. de Sainte Marthe, at the age of seventy. He belonged to a well-known family of Paris, and was ever not only a faithful but a courageous friend to Port Royal; he is one of those deeply spiritual and hidden lives of which the "race" of Port Royal has so many examples. We can never forget that it was M. de Sainte Marthe who prowled around Port Royal on dark nights in the first persecution to give such consolation as he could.

It was in 1709 that M. Wallon de Beaupuis ended his long life of ceaseless devotion. It will be remembered that he was one of the masters of the *Petites Écoles;* and he was M. de Tillemont's confessor up to the time of the historian's death. M. de Beaupuis was the son of a lawyer, and was born at Beauvais in 1621. Sent to Paris in 1637, he was taught rhetoric by the well-known Jesuit, Père Nouet, and was also a pupil of Antoine Arnauld's in philosophy. Long years afterwards, M. de Beaupuis used to speak with delight about a disputation of his, in which M. Arnauld had come to his rescue.

De Beaupuis, in the course of vacations spent at Beauvais, met M. Manguelen, and they became great friends. M. Manguelen lent the youth *La Fréquente Communion,* which seems to have greatly impressed him.

M. Manguelen sent him to M. Singlin and M. de Rebours, and with them De Beaupuis found Arnauld and an old friend, M. Hermant, who had been a Professor at Beauvais, and was a great friend of *les nôtres* of Port Royal. He went to Port Royal, and Arnauld sent him to call on Descartes on his behalf! Evidently Arnauld recognised his pupil's philosophical powers. There seems to have been some family opposition to his throwing in his lot with Port Royal, but it would not appear to have been very serious. He

writes to his sister that she is not to be alarmed because he is so great a friend of Antoine Arnauld, quite in the manner of an Oxford undergraduate who might have written in the last century to justify his friendship with Newman or with Pusey.

From 1647 to 1660 M. de Beaupuis directed the schools, and after the dispersal of them, he lived with Pascal's brother-in-law, M. Périer, and educated his sons.

He took priest's orders in 1666, and was made Superior of the Seminary at Beauvais, and he was also Superior of two convents of Ursuline nuns. For a time he was unmolested, for the Bishop Choart de Buzanval was one of the first Episcopal friends of Port Royal, and for some time was M. de Beaupuis's confessor. Those ten years must have been happy ones, for a priest's life of preaching, of administering the Sacraments, of directing souls, of occasionally being allowed to witness the conversion of sinners, is undoubtedly a happy one.

In 1676 the Bishop died, and his successor was a person who was anxious to please those in high places and to crush any tendencies to the supposed heresy of Beauvais. M. de Beaupuis was deprived of all his occupations, was not even permitted to hear confessions. He made no resistance, but retired quietly to his sister's house, where he lived for twenty-nine years, passing his days in an unbroken round of prayer and study. "It must be owned," the Bishop said to one of his satellites, "these are very respectable people on whom we are being particularly hard." And Sainte Beuve tells us how that in 1697, when the Bishop, now a Cardinal, returned after a long absence to Beauvais, M. de Beaupuis having gone to pay his respects, the Bishop overwhelmed him with attentions. He knew that nothing would be asked of him and that it was quite safe to be very civil. The situation is not unique.

M. de Beaupuis was extraordinarily self-disciplined, and his life was even more ascetic than that of M. de Tillemont.

Every year he made an expedition to Port Royal,

one of the few interruptions to the daily round of prayer and study; and he usually paid a visit to Paris. One year—it is sad to read of this—M. de Beaupuis went as far as La Trappe, in order to visit his old pupil, Dom Pierre Le Nain, M. de Tillemont's brother. When he arrived, the Abbot, the celebrated De Rancé, refused permission for the interview to take place. This was a real wound; he journeyed to Tillemont to pour out his heart to the other brother. M. de Tillemont wrote to M. de Rancé, who replied that M. de Beaupuis was not in favour with the Court, and that the Abbot had been forbidden to receive him. There had been a supposed plot or conspiracy among some of the clergy at Beauvais and four Canons had been sent to the Bastille. M. de Beaupuis had proved his innocence, but suspicion clung round him, and with the petty cruelty of a tyrant, Louis XIV. had conveyed his sentiments as to the blameless and holy priest. Of him De Tillemont wrote in his will, that he for ever thanked God for having granted to him the blessing of being educated by a master who was destitute of ambition. Certainly this is one of the marks of our Port Royalists, the lack of ambition.

M. de Beaupuis had to bear the sorrow of losing friend after friend. We have seen how he watched by de Tillemont's dying bed, and accompanied the funeral to Port Royal. Another pupil no less dear was M. du Fossé, who died in 1692.

And so the years passed by, and when he was growing very old and infirm, he was begged to relax something of his austerities; he only replied that the near approach of death made it only more needful for him to be strict and watchful.

He passed away at the age of eighty-seven. As one of the historians of Port Royal remarks, the whole of the De Beaupuis family were saints. No less than six of his nieces entered the life of Religion, four of them were nuns of Port Royal. Two of his nephews were at La Trappe, one a monk, the other an oblate; both had died before that unfortunate visit.

He was taken away before the final dispersion of Port Royal. As we read the story of these holy, blameless, learned clergy, who were more or less associated with Port Royal, our hearts burn with indignation. Louis XIV., entirely uninstructed in religion, was possessed with the idea that, as one modern historian, M. Lavisse, remarks, "Le Roi, comme Dieu, fait ce qui lui plaît." That was all. The views and ideals of Port Royal were incomprehensible to him; the idea of training up an instructed laity was ridiculous, and so Port Royal was to him merely a nest of conspirators, and the Gallican Church was prevented from being what we hope our own branch of the Church has been, a bulwark against the attacks of unbelief.[1]

In 1694 the greatest of the Arnaulds ended his fifteen years of exile.

After his departure from Paris in 1679, Antoine Arnauld had wandered from place to place, and at last settled in Brussels. The Père Quesnel, and M. du Guet lived with him, as did M. Ruth d'Ans, a former confessor at Port Royal, and M. Ernest Guelphe, his secretary. They led the life of religious. M. Arnauld said Mass every day in a room set apart for a chapel, and recited his Breviary, and spent much time in prayer and meditation. He had never been anything but a devout Catholic, and had no leanings towards Protestantism. He had a very great devotion for the Psalms, and as his eyesight began to fail, he set to work to learn the Psalter by heart. In August 1694 he fell ill, and died on the 8th. He passed away in peace, with the dear friends of his exile around him, and the comfort of the last Sacraments to sustain him, those Sacraments of which so many at Port Royal had been deprived.

Antoine Arnauld is a great figure. He never faltered in his devotion for truth, his passion for righteousness. And he had no heretical views.

St Augustine has been condemned by no Pope, and

[1] See Appendix, Note IX.

to St Augustine Arnauld could and did appeal. That a man who was a true Catholic, a learned theologian, a devoted and able guide of souls, should have been driven into exile, is a miserable bit of history.

Arnauld's writings fill a vast number of volumes, yet there is little which is of permanent value. This is the fate of all or nearly all controversial writers whose minds are of the second order. Varied as were his gifts, he had no creative genius, no great powers of metaphysical thought.

But he did the especial work to which he was called —the defence of truth, the upholding of a moral standard, and he was "sans peur et sans reproche"; he was faultless in his life, his temper, his courage.

It is difficult not to wish sometimes that in the first days of persecution Arnauld had been more ready to submit his judgment at times to others. In the later days, one has nothing but admiration for him, nothing but regret that he and others were banished and silenced and compelled to relinquish the service of the Church in France.

What could that Church not have effected, had the moral teaching of St Cyran and of Arnauld, the spirituality and the love for Holy Scripture of De Saci and of Le Tourneux, been suffered to remain as living influences?

There will be always men of different minds, of different tendencies of thought, in the Church of God. It is a terrible unfaithfulness to God when a dominant party in any branch of the Catholic Church seeks to crush and drive away those who see truth in another and equally important aspect.

Arnauld was ready to defend the faith against friend or foe, and he had controversies on grace with Nicole, on philosophy with Malebranche. He defended the translation of the New Testament, he was prompt to defend Catholics against Protestant attacks, and his letters form many volumes.

"Rest!" he exclaimed once to Nicole, "have I not all eternity to rest in?" And so fighting, working,

praying, he ended a life which had been single in purpose—the purpose of serving the cause of God's Truth.

He lies in the Church of St Catherine at Brussels, but his heart was brought to Port Royal, and an epitaph was composed by an ecclesiastic and minor poet, M. Santeuil, who had a great attraction towards Port Royal, but who lacked the courage to stick to an unpopular cause. He tried to retract his verses in after years, and shared the fate of people who try to please everybody.

Arnauld left various legacies to his faithful friends, and it is interesting to note that he bequeathed books to his great-nephew, the son of M. Borroger, whom Arnauld had married to Mlle. de Sericourt Le Maître.

M. du Fossé, the faithful friend and chronicler of Port Royal, died in 1698. His sister-in-law, Madame Borroger, writing a week before his death to her cousin, M. de Pomponne, says: "He is very ill, but his days are spent in prayer, in reading and in commenting on Holy Scripture." Joy was reflected on his face as he lay dying.

Du Fossé, as he reveals himself in his Memoirs, is a wonderfully lovable, upright, loyal gentleman, possessing excellent literary style, and a great deal of knowledge of all kinds. He was a good classical scholar and a learned ecclesiastical historian, but he also knew a great deal about medicine, and used this knowledge to help the peasants on his estate. He was charitable and kind to the poor, and in the appalling famine of 1694 he did his best for the wretched peasants, whose lot was indeed terrible.

Du Fossé seems to have been both loving and loved; his relations with his parents, his brothers and sisters, were always deeply affectionate. One of his sisters, when she was ill, and about to undergo some terrible operation, could only bring herself to endure it if Pierre would hold her, which he did.

Sainte Beuve quotes a delightful letter of a friend of Du Fossé, written just after his death. "M. du Fossé,"

says M. Vuillart, "was tall, very well made, and was endowed with a perfectly charming temper. He had a clear, decisive, and equitable mind, and as he was a good business man he was resorted to by his neighbours to decide all their differences."

As Sainte Beuve says, these letters, written by intimate friends, are indeed funeral orations.

M. du Fossé had ended his own Memoirs with the death of his lifelong friend, the historian, M. de Tillemont, whose death preceded his own by only ten months.

After the peace of the Church, M. de Tillemont left Paris, where, as we know, he had lived with Du Fossé and with M. Le Tourneux; he chose a small parish between Port Royal and Chevreuse for his home, and in those years of tranquillity M. de Saci induced him to take minor orders, and finally those of the priesthood in 1676. He was just forty; and like all other friends of Port Royal who became priests, he celebrated his first sung Mass in the Church of the Monastery. It was on St Augustine's Day, the 25th of August 1676. In 1679 M. de Tillemont retired to a small estate of Tillemont, which belonged to his family, not far from Vincennes.

Tillemont was from that time his home; he paid a visit to Antoine Arnauld in 1681, and once a year he visited his brother at the Monastery of La Trappe.

The picture given us of M. de Tillemont's life is very beautiful. Day after day he rose at four in summer, a little later in winter, and spent the day in prayer, in study, and, to some extent, in good works, for he was always willing to write to people, and to teach his servants. It was a feature of his orderly life that he always said the Office at the exact hour which he had marked out for it.

Student as he was, he loved the round of services, and never felt it an interruption to leave his work and recite an Office. He liked to go on Sundays and festivals to his parish church and act as deacon at the sung Mass, and he had a great love for plain song.

Every day after dinner he took his stick and went out to walk for two hours, speaking to the people he met; in his gentleness and reverence for children he reminds us of our own saint and poet, Keble. De Tillemont loved to see tiny children at Mass, and was not at all disturbed if they cried. "He thought their presence at the Divine Office was a real benefit to the Church, of which they are . . . the most holy part; he thought their presence really contributed to the efficacy of the prayers which were being offered to God."

How different is this tender, beautiful view of childhood from the temper of those who would shut out children from the Lord's Service on His day.

M. de Tillemont's father, M. Le Nain, survived his illustrious son, but only for three weeks. The relations between them were most touching, perhaps all the more so, as the mother of the historian died some years earlier. M. de Tillemont had come to Paris to see her, and on arriving at his home was told that she was dead. It was her tender and loving son who sang her funeral Mass and committed her body to the grave.

We have already spoken of M. de Tillemont's ecclesiastical history; he left various other writings, some of which were published after his death; amongst them two volumes of letters.

Sainte Beuve quotes one which De Tillemont wrote to Bossuet in 1695, which, says Sainte Beuve, is as it were the final hymn of his life; he is writing of the union of the soul with God which results in perfect adoration. How at last our words, our praises, end in "a silence worthy of His Greatness . . . our soul . . . will only see God, will only hear God, will only enjoy God; finally, will only love God. This happiness is the happiness which God promises us. . . ."

De Tillemont's letters are grave and devout, and to those he loved full of affection.

Some of the most beautiful are to his niece, who was a nun, and in these he tells her of the dangers and of the joys of the Religious Life, and of its special temptations.

His secretary, M. Tronchai, wrote a book called *La Vie et l'Esprit de M. de Tillemont*, and in it we see something of his inward life. He had great spiritual discernment.

One of his Meditations is based on the thought that God's mercy makes our faults to be means of doing us good.

Another is, that to omit or to cut short a good deed is to take away a pearl from the Crown which awaits us.

Speaking of penitence, he writes: "Do not let us deceive ourselves; there is no sin either in any of the saints or in us which can remain unpunished. We must chasten ourselves or God will chasten us. Blessed are those whom He does not keep unpunished until this life is over.

"It is one of the adorable secrets of God's fatherly goodness towards His children, that at times He takes care to purify them by the sorrow He sends them, at times through sickness, at times in other ways.

"Everything which happens to us in this world against our inclination, against our wishes, against our natural bent, is a penance which God sends us, which we should receive with submission, and which we ought to use with care. We must not murmur against the injustice of those who hate us, nor against the neglect or evil temper of those among whom we dwell. All these are simply the servants of God our Father, Who punishes us by them, so that we may be made worthy of the heritage He is preparing for us."

It is all very simple, and yet profound; he reminds us again of our own Keble and his sober standard of feeling in matters of practical religion.[1]

About ten months before M. de Tillemont's death, his health began to fail. A cough which he had neglected grew worse, and urged by M. de Beaupuis, his confessor, his dear friend, his master at *les Petites Écoles*, he came to Paris. On the Epiphany he made his Communion; he was too ill to say Mass; on the

[1] See Appendix, Note X.

10th he died, quite suddenly; on rising from his bed, he fell back in the arms of his faithful secretary and biographer, M. Tronchai, and passed away with no pain, no suffering. A fitting end to a life which seems to us to have never lost the innocence of baptism.

Poor M. du Fossé—he had hoped, he says, that as he was the elder, and apparently was himself a dying man, he would have been spared this terrible sorrow; but he writes, "God has shortened his [de Tillemont's] time of penitence, and called him suddenly, whereas for me who have lived so ordinary a life, it was needful that God should give me time to sacrifice myself to Him."

M. de Tillemont was buried at Port Royal.

Meanwhile, during these sad years, when the Community of Port Royal lost one after another of its members, Racine was always a firm friend, and served Port Royal whenever he could.

In 1695 the Archbishop of Paris died, struck down by apoplexy, and passed out of this life unaided by priest or sacrament.

Five months before his death Racine had been entreating him to give the unfortunate nuns a Superior in place of M. de la Grange; the Bishop of Soissons, who was present, said to Racine afterwards: "Be patient —don't disturb yourself; don't you see death in his face?"

There was something extraordinarily terrible and dreary about this man's death. He was found by his servants unconscious and dying; and the king himself seems to have shuddered when he was told of the circumstances. For that de Harlai's private life was scandalous, seems to have been a well-known fact.

Sainte Beuve quotes a letter in which it is said that one eminent prelate absolutely refused to preach a funeral sermon for the late Archbishop, saying: "Two things prevent me—his life and his death."

It was well known that the Archbishop had fully meant to make an end of Port Royal. His sister, Madame de Harlai, had been nominated Abbess of

Port Royal de Paris after the death of Mère Dorothée Perdreau; but Madame de Harlai was a holy woman, and incapable of entertaining any evil design. On her death the Archbishop nominated his niece, who was a very different person.

M. Tronchai, M. de Tillemont's secretary, whose sister was a nun at Port Royal de Paris, wrote to the Abbess Agnès de Sainte Thècle, the aunt of Racine, that there was a plan to unite Port Royal de Paris to Port Royal des Champs; the nuns at Port Royal des Champs were to be dispersed. But M. de Harlai's death prevented the execution of this scheme.

The new Archbishop, M. de Noailles, Bishop of Châlons, whom the king chose, was a good man, a gentleman, a theologian, but incapable of holding his own against the king or the Jesuits. He was the type of man who is obstinate when he ought to give way, and weak when he ought to be firm.

He had confidence in his own judgment and his own good intentions, and he meant to hold the balance between two parties. He is not the first nor was he the last ecclesiastic who, having been put in a place far beyond his capacity to fill, manages to be more cruel and more unjust to people and schools of thought whom he knows to be in the right, than are their declared enemies. Few things are more fatal to the Church than the "peace-at-any-price" policy—or the caution of a man whose duty it is to be bold. But at first the Port Royalists rejoiced in trembling. Racine wrote a letter of warning to his aunt, the burden of which was to "keep out of sight." "I know," he writes, "you are to be absolutely trusted, but the indiscreet delight of one of your friends is much to be dreaded."

All went well for a little while; friendly letters were exchanged between the Community and the Archbishop; and in 1696 Racine prevailed on M. de Noailles to permit the re-election of his aunt as Abbess and the appointment of M. Roynette as Superior.

For a little while there was a respite, but the

Community steadily diminished in numbers, and, as we have seen, friend after friend passed away. In 1697 M. de Noailles "visited" Port Royal des Champs—this was just before Du Fossé's death—and he tells us how the Archbishop spoke to all the Sisters, and after having vainly tried to find some trace of the evil doctrines or practices which had been laid to their charge, could only discover all the virtues which ought to be found among the brides of Christ.

It is said that M. de Noailles was so much impressed by this visit that he begged the king to allow Port Royal to receive novices—but all in vain. Nor was the Comtesse de Grammont more fortunate; she had been brought up at Port Royal des Champs, had made retreats there, and fell into disgrace for doing so; in spite of all this, she boldly attacked the king on the subject of Port Royal, but was silenced; though she did not lose favour again. Louis respected people who were courageous.

Racine's aunt died in 1699, and the last Abbess of Port Royal was elected—Elisabeth de Sainte Anne Boulard, who was at that time seventy-one. She had been a nun at Port Royal since 1651. In 1700 died the last of the Arnauld sisters, the "Mademoiselle de Luzanci," who had entered Port Royal with Madame de Sainte Ange.

It is extraordinary, inexplicable, that the Community could not have been left to die in peace. The brutality with which a handful of aged women were treated, was such that one can hardly bear to read the account of these last days.

The Abbess of Port Royal de Paris made a fresh attempt to seize the revenues of Port Royal des Champs, but the Archbishop, now the Cardinal de Noailles, withstood her; and, on hearing that this remarkable lady had given a ball in her convent parlour, told her that it was not fair that if Port Royal de Paris gave a ball, Port Royal des Champs should pay for the music.

But we are approaching the end.

Always, during the whole of this period of one

hundred years, it is on account of someone else that the Port Royal nuns had to suffer.

The confessor of Port Royal, M. Eustace, who was in no sense of the word a theologian, published a work in six volumes, the *Cas de Conscience*, which treated of the scruples of a confessor who had been perplexed by the affair of Jansenism and the Formulary. Forty theologians were consulted and their opinions quoted: one acute person had wisely refused to commit himself, saying that he would settle the doubts of the scrupulous confessor by word of mouth.

The excitement caused by this extraordinary piece of folly was immense. Some kind person delated it to Rome, and the Cardinal Archbishop was roused with some difficulty to censure the work, and to order the theologians to retract their signatures. This was done by all but two. Poor M. Eustace stayed on at Port Royal until 1705, and then retired to a monastery, to spend the rest of his life bewailing his folly, which had been so great that more than one writer thinks that the whole *Cas de Conscience* was a Jesuit manifesto.

The Pope, Clement XI., urged on by Louis XIV., once and for all settled the question by the bull *Vineam Domini Sabaoth*, presented to the clergy by the Cardinal de Noailles, with an instruction *Against Jansenism*. All quibbles about *fait* and *droit* were swept away, no "respectful silence" would suffice, and there was a general outbreak of severity.

As if this were not enough, Père Quesnel, Antoine Arnauld's friend, was arrested at Brussels, and all his papers were sent to Paris. There were all sorts of mysteries, or supposed mysteries, ciphers, and supposed plots, which were only clumsy jokes; the Père Quesnel was fond of harmless pleasantries of this kind. Who can wonder that people liable to be arrested at any moment employed disguises? But the letters and papers were the means of disgracing not a few people.

And poor Port Royal! A M. Marignier, who was now their confessor, was compelled to present the bull for the nuns' signatures; and on Passion Sunday 1706

the Abbess, in the name of the nuns, declared that she and her community received it with all respect, "sans déroger à ce qui s'est fait à leur égard à la paix de l'Eglise sous le Pape Clement IX."[1]

Alas for the community! As no individual signature was required, would it not have been wiser to yield? Surely Sainte Beuve is right in saying that it was ridiculous for a handful of nuns to hold out against the whole French Church.

Of course Père Quesnel, who had succeeded Antoine Arnauld as the leader of the party, approved their action. He had escaped, and was safe at Amsterdam. But there were others who disapproved.

Be it as it may, the nuns stood firm. April came, and Sister after Sister died—the Abbess herself, and Isabelle Le Feron, who was the last of the nuns to serve as historian or keeper of the archives of Port Royal.

Poor Sisters, as they knelt around the death-bed of their Mother, they seemed to hear youthful voices chanting melodiously. Who knows?

But Port Royal was dying too slowly. The Cardinal absolutely refused permission for the election of a new Abbess, and M. Marignier after hearing this went home to die of a broken heart.

A decree of Council now ordered that a considerable portion of the Port Royal revenue should be taken from them for the benefit of Port Royal de Paris, that only thirty-six people should be allowed to stay in the Abbey; everyone else was to go. Eighteen persons, who for various reasons inhabited Port Royal, left.

Still, things did not move very quickly. The Port Royalists appealed, and wrote remonstrances and memorials, and Louis said impatiently to the Cardinal that things must go "more quickly." The Cardinal sent two priests to try to win over the remaining Sisters, and this did not succeed any better than in the days of Péréfixe. They were excommunicated on the 22nd November 1707.

And the last of the Solitaires, M. Le Noir de Saint

[1] See Appendix, Note XI.

Claude, was arrested and sent to the Bastille, where he stayed until the death of Louis XIV. He had acted as the lawyer of Port Royal, and had prepared all their cases for the *avocats*.

Dom Clémencet tells us that when M. Le Noir was arrested, some peasants, who had come to Mass, were ready to attack the guards who were carrying him off, and M. Le Noir had to beg them to be quiet. Poor peasants! they mourned for Port Royal. M. Le Noir led a most pious and holy life when he was in the Bastille, and for all the rest of his life. He died in 1742, a true spiritual descendant of the first Solitaires.

There was a strong feeling in Paris that the whole business was extraordinarily cruel and unjust. It is said that a priest contrived to administer the Sacraments to the excommunicated Sisters, and various good women sent them alms. On the 2nd March 1708 Pope Clement XI. issued a bull for the suppression of Port Royal des Champs; it was to be reunited to the Paris house. Only, a provision was to be made for each member, choir and lay Sisters, and they were to be allowed to remain in their monastery and use their church until their death. This comparatively merciful arrangement did not satisfy Louis, who feared he would die before he could enjoy the intense pleasure of seeing Port Royal utterly destroyed, and a second bull was sent to the Archbishop of Paris, which gave him full powers to disperse the nuns into other religious houses.

When this bull was published there were still some struggles on the part of the Sisters; they appealed to the Archbishop of Lyons, who was Primate, but this was useless; the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris had received the bull, and could act with the full authority of Rome.

It is a great pity that the friends of Port Royal now descended to anonymous letters and warnings directed to Cardinal de Noailles. These were probably due to one injudicious friend, M. Mabille, who, faithful as he was to the cause, was not *of* Port Royal. In one letter the Cardinal was solemnly exhorted to

remember the sad deaths of three of his predecessors: M. de Marca, M. de Péréfixe, and M. de Harlai.

M. de Noailles now resolved to institute a formal enquiry into the affairs of Port Royal des Champs and Port Royal de Paris, in order to satisfy himself as to whether the union of the two communities would be advantageous or not. *De Commodo et incommodo*, it was called. At Port Royal des Champs the neighbouring parish priests and the farmers were all questioned, but nothing to the disadvantage of Port Royal des Champs could be extracted.

The members of the Paris house were advised to sell their house, pay their debts, and to be as virtuous and devout as were the nuns of Port Royal.

Madame de Château-Renaud, who was now Abbess of Port Royal de Paris, was a lady of good family, perfectly correct as to her religious life, but in no wise an austere or very devout person. She now felt that she might take possession of Port Royal des Champs, and having consulted the Cardinal, she set off on October 1st, 1709, accompanied by two notaries and some of her nuns.

She was received with perfect politeness by the Prioress (for there was now no Abbess); but although poor Mère Anastasie du Mesnil was extremely courteous, nothing would induce her to assemble the community and receive Madame de Château-Renaud as Abbess. It was the last feeble flutter of defiance. There were the usual formalities, and pleadings and protests, and Madame Château-Renaud retired, saying that she was deeply grieved to see that these nuns were bent on ruining themselves.

Madame de Château-Renaud took formal possession of the Abbey and the church, but was unable to toll the bell, as a servant of the monastery had cut the rope.

"That was the only token of impatience I remarked in the whole business," wrote the Abbess, "everything else passed off in the most remarkable gentleness, and in perfect silence. It makes me feel certain that if these

nuns would only submit, they are perfectly fit to edify the Church exceedingly."

Madame de Château-Renaud then left Port Royal and drove to Saint Cyr, where was Madame de Maintenon, to whom a full account of the proceedings was duly given.

One little sneer escaped these great ladies. Madame de Maintenon asked the Abbess if she had perceived that peculiar atmosphere which was said to pervade Port Royal, to which Madame de Château-Renaud replied that *she* was not good enough for that sort of thing, and therefore she had not noticed it.

Madame de Château-Renaud received an order of the Council on the 19th October 1708 commanding the Prioress and nuns of Port Royal des Champs to receive the Abbess of Port Royal de Paris and to give up everything to her. Every appeal, every legal device had failed; now the community could only wait in patience for their final agony. It was not long delayed.

The new confessor of the king, Père Tellier, was a far more implacable enemy than ever Père La Chaise had been;[1] he urged the king to finish. "Madame de Château-Renaud would never be suffered to effect a peaceable entrance," said he. "Unless the king would give precise orders for the dispersion of the nuns, the desired end would never be attained."

And the long-desired decree was granted, and the enemies of Port Royal at last triumphed.

A fresh order in Council was made, to this effect, "that the king, on account of various considerations affecting the good of his service and the tranquillity of his kingdom, had resolved to disperse into various places the nuns of Port Royal." "Thus," says Dom Clémencet, "are the best Princes deceived!" But Louis XIV. did not sin in ignorance; it is possible that he did feel some lingering reluctance for the work of brutality on a handful of elderly, and in some cases, of dying women. M. d'Argenson, an official of police,

[1] Père La Chaise died in January 1709. St Simon gives a terrible picture of his successor. See Appendix, Note XII.

was ordered to proceed to Port Royal des Champs. He bore with him a certain number of letters addressed to the heads of various convents, and written in these terms :—

"Dearly beloved,—Having given orders that . . . (such and such a Sister) . . . should be consigned to your monastery, we order you to receive her, and to retain her until further orders; we notify you that a pension for her will be regularly paid. See that you fail not in this. Such is our pleasure."

M. de Pontchartrain, the son of the then Chancellor, also wrote to each of the selected Convents to give notice of the arrival of the guests. In these letters he directed that the nuns were to be treated kindly, but that they must be allowed no intercourse with anyone outside the convent in which they were imprisoned.

The Bishops of the different dioceses into which the nuns were sent also each received a letter which gave precise details as to how the poor women were to be guarded.

It seems incredible that Louis should have taken the trouble to enter into such details.

M. d'Argenson set out on the 24th October. In the early morning of that day, when the community, after saying Matins, returned to their dormitories, they found that their lamps had *gone out.*

Later on, a peasant came to the Prioress and told her that a file of carriages was approaching, and all around were Archers of the Guard. M. d'Argenson entered the monastery on foot, and having posted a sentinel, proceeded to the parlour and read the order to the Prioress, who had been summoned. The doors were to be opened, every paper was to be given up.

The Prioress replied that she and all would obey, and M. d'Argenson was admitted.

He went to the chapter-house, and was met by the Prioress and two nuns next in authority to her. He then went with these poor nuns to examine the archives and the books and title-deeds of the monastery. While

this was going on the bell sounded for Terce, and for the very last time Mère Angélique's spiritual children assembled together and sang that lovely Office, not one of them knowing what was about to happen.

Psalm xxiv. (in our version xxv.) was usually sung by them on Tuesdays at Terce, and it was appropriate: "Ad te levavi animam meam." After Terce the whole community were summoned to the chapter-house, and when the twenty-two Sisters were assembled, M. d'Argenson read aloud the Order.

It seems to have been received in silence; nearly fifty years had passed since the days of M. de Péréfixe, when young and excitable women burst into sobs and tears. Now the few who remembered those evil days were very old, and all sat silent and still under the hand of God.

The Prioress remonstrated gently against the removal from the diocese of Paris, and ventured to point out that it would have been more merciful to send them in parties of two at least. With some difficulty they were allowed a few minutes to go to their cells and pack up some necessaries.

Meanwhile, outside the monastery the country people were waiting the departure of the nuns; for daily distribution of food had been made to them. When one remembers the awful poverty and misery of the French peasant in these later years of Louis's reign, one cannot wonder that the peasants wept and mourned.

The nuns reappeared, all but one poor paralyzed Sister, Euphrasie Robert; and then the Prioress ventured to remind M. d'Argenson that no Sister had yet broken her fast; but as he would not allow the lay Sisters to go and fetch some provisions, only a very little bread and wine were brought. M. d'Argenson would suffer no delay, and began to read the list. The Prioress, who possessed great commonsense and dignity, ventured to beg that those who were very ill might be sent to the nearer convents.

Then came the awful moment of saying good-bye. One by one the Sisters implored forgiveness of the

rest for any fault, and farewells were said. M. d'Argenson almost broke down.

The nuns were obliged to show him their bundles; poor things, they had been so hurried and confused, that their trembling hands could hardly collect the few necessaries they wished to take, and two of them fell ill.

However, they were ready; and each knelt for the last time in the Chapel before the Blessed Sacrament; once again each offered herself to God in union with our Lord, and the final farewells were said. The nuns in the last moments were perfectly quiet. The Prioress gave M. d'Argenson an account of what was owing to the servants, and spoke to him of a helpless woman who had been in the service of the house for fifty years. At last the carriages began to move away, and the nuns were removed. One old Sister of eighty-one, who was sent to Amiens, died on the 8th November.

As for the unfortunate paralysed Sister, she was left alone for a whole day, and was then taken to Mantes, where she was kindly treated as to her physical wants. But the Mother of the convent had actually to tease and torment the poor woman, who was eighty-six, to sign a retractation of her errors. Whether the Sister did so or not is unimportant.

Yet no one was cruel. M. d'Argenson seems really to have tried to be kind to the nuns, and to have gone to each carriage as it set out, to see if the occupants were fairly comfortable. The Sisters of the various convents do not seem to have been anything but good. It is not needful to follow the histories of each of the Sisters. All were forced to sign save two: these were the brave, upright, dignified Prioress, who showed herself, as Sainte Beuve says, a worthy daughter of the Mère du Fargis and of Angélique de Saint Jean; and the Sister Gertrude du Valois. The Prioress was sent to Blois and remained seven years in the convent of the Ursulines there, and at the time of her death an order had arrived to set her free. For Louis XIV. was dead, and it was hoped that many prisoners might be released

—a vain hope, so far as Port Royal was concerned. It seems that a sister of the Mère du Mesnil had used influence for her.

The Sister Gertrude du Valois, a special child of the Mère Angélique de St Jean, is an interesting person. She was banished to Chartres, and much loved by all the community with whom she was placed but she seems to have suffered a good deal, especially as regarded the deprivation of the Eucharist. She wrote some beautiful words about this, quite in the manner of the true Port Royalists. The widow of the Prince du Condé exerted herself on the Sister's behalf, and at last, in 1716, she was taken to another convent and restored to full Communion. She died in 1722, and her last years were cheered by letters from the Père Quesnel.

But let us return to Port Royal. M. d'Argenson stayed two days longer, dismissing the servants,[1] and searching their bundles to see if any papers were concealed. For there was a general idea that, if only the search was continued long enough and diligently enough, incriminating papers would be found, and a conspiracy against Church and State would be discovered and exposed, and all these abominable brutalities would be fully justified.

M. d'Argenson carried off quantities of books and papers, and gave the king a full account of his doings.

But still the buildings of Port Royal remained. What was to be done with them?

The Cardinal wished to send the nuns of Port Royal de Paris to Port Royal des Champs, but this did not suit any of the Sisters, though the Abbess made an expedition to the deserted house, and carried off quantities of books and furniture. It was well known that the friends of Port Royal hoped against hope that the faithful might be restored to their home. Some prints had been published representing the buildings of Port Royal des Champs; these were seized.

And before long an order was given in Council that

[1] See Appendix, Note XIII.

the whole place was to be demolished. The Marquis de Pomponne (son of the minister) took alarm. He petitioned the king to allow him to remove the bodies of his relations, "who had the misfortune to be buried in a place which had fallen under the displeasure of his majesty!" The historian (Dom Clémencet) not unnaturally regards this petition as unworthy of an Arnauld, and yet we can hardly blame him.

Permission was given, and the bodies of all the Arnaulds who lay at Port Royal were removed, nine in all, and the three caskets which contained the hearts of the Mère Angélique and of M. Arnauld, and of one of M. de Pomponne's daughters. They were all buried in the Chapel of an estate belonging to the Marquis. Other bodies were removed, but some were doubtless left underneath the ruins. Racine was laid in the Church of St Étienne du Mont near Pascal. Some of the bodies were buried at the Parish Church of Magny, others in one deep pit in the cemetery of St Lambert. But the most revolting details are given of the way in which the removal of the unclaimed bodies was performed. This is too horrible to describe. Nothing could exceed the indecency and horror of these last scenes. Sainte Beuve appropriately reminds us of the profanation of the royal tombs at Saint Denis in 1793.

And Port Royal at last lay under the feet of its enemies. They had cried: "Down with it, down with it, even to the ground," and they had their will.

Louis XIV. had been able to accomplish his desire. In the seven years of misery and disaster, before his long reign ceased, did he ever think of the innocent whom he had persecuted, of the blood which he had caused to be poured out?

As for the Cardinal de Noailles, he was overwhelmed by the horrors, so far exceeding anything he had feared. His health gave way, and he seems to have enjoyed no peace to the end of his life. He once made a pilgrimage to Port Royal, and knelt there in bitter anguish.[1]

[1] See Appendix, Note XIV.

"The rest is silence."

For it does not lie within the scope of this book to pursue the fortunes of the later Jansenists, and Père Quesnel, and Père du Guet; these friends of Antoine Arnauld are not *of* Port Royal.

The story of Port Royal ends with this most revolting destruction of the material buildings, and with the crushing out of a great spiritual movement. For all those whose names we love—Mère Angélique, Mère Agnès; for all the Arnaulds; for St Cyran and Pascal; for the gentle, tender Du Fossé, Fontaine, and Lancelot; for the well-beloved physician Hamon; for the single-hearted and devoted confessors and directors, Singlin, Sainte Marthe, Le Tourneux, and so many others; for the brave and simple-hearted men who gave up all that makes life seemingly attractive, to devote themselves to prayer and penitence; for the historian and the poet; for the women who risked favour in high places, and who found pardon and peace through the medium of Port Royal; for those whose names we forget, holy nuns, devoted servants; for all these we give thanks to God. For these all go to the making up of that Temple whose builder and maker is God. Not one tear, or privation, or suffering is lost.

But the story is a great warning.

It is possible to crush and to destroy that which was meant in the mind of God to be a power for good in the Church. And it is possible, on the other hand, for holy and noble souls to make mistakes and to be overmuch occupied in attention to one aspect of truth, to forget that the whole is greater than the part, and that the whole body must be "fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth," if the body is to be built up in love.

There is nothing which we more neglect than the teachings of history; there is nothing which will at once so cheer and so warn us as those teachings.

In a book, the value of which is out of all proportion to its size, an eminent professor of Ecclesiastical History

has told us how to use these teachings.[1] The diverging tendencies of spiritual thought alike "spring from the teaching of our Lord Himself. They are not antagonistic; but complementary, they are both necessary to the Church."

When shall we learn this lesson, when will those who keep the Christian Creed whole and undefiled recognise that there always must be divergencies? The Puritan, the Catholic, or, as it is so well put in Dr Bigg's book, the Mystic and the Disciplinarian, will always be found side by side in the Catholic Church.

The story of Port Royal is the story of these divergencies in thought—Jesuit and Port Royalist represented two tendencies. The seventeenth century was not ripe for toleration. Port Royal was crushed, and crushed because it stood for what was unworldly as against the worldly world.

"But the souls of the righteous are in the Hand of God. . . . God made trial of them, and found them worthy of Himself. As gold in the furnace He proved them, and as a whole burnt offering He accepted them."

"Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven."

[1] *Unity in Diversity*, by Dr Bigg.

NOTES

NOTE I.—On Augustinus (p. 99)

When the Bull of Urban VIII. against the book was published in 1643, the University of Louvain issued a letter to the University of Paris, in which it is said :—

"Quoi faudra-t-il donc que la doctrine utile de St Augustin, qui a soutenu autrefois tant de combats et remporté tant de victoires, succombe enfin et soit accablée. . . . À Dieu ne plaise que l'héritage du Verbe, incarné et le patrimonie de Jésus crucifié soit ainsi profané et dissipé.

NOTE II.—On "La Fréquente Communion" (p. 184)

Seventeen Bishops wrote a letter to the Pope in favour of Antoine Arnauld's book, in which they speak of the results the book may have in checking laxity in moral questions. They go on to say :—

"Non seulement, il ne combat pas la participation très fréquente de la Sainte Eucharistie, mais il y exhorte les fidèles, et n'en reprend que la mauvaise usage ; il soutient qu'on peut différer quelquefois l'absolution, mais non pas qu'on doive la différer toujours ; il enseigne qu'elle ne déclare pas seulement que le péché est remis, mais qu'elle opère aussi la remission du péché et qu'elle confère la Grace."

And they go on to say that this teaching is the teaching of the Council of Trent.

NOTE III.—The Fronde (p. 188)

"La guerre civile fut nommée Fronde, d'un jeu d'enfants interdit par la police, et ce fut en effet un jeu, mais abominable. Un moment, il s'agit d'une réforme de l'Etat, et cette réforme était nécessaire, et très justes étaient les griefs et les colères et même les fureurs contre le gouvernement du Cardinal, mais, tout de suite, au Parlement qui réclame la réforme et se charge de la faire, se joignent des princes, des grands

seigneurs et leurs clientèles, dont les mobiles sont la cupidité vulgaire, des amours presque tous frivoles, des humeurs, des caprices, ou seulement le besoin de remuer."—ERNEST LAVISSE, *Histoire de France*, tome vii., p. 42.

NOTE IV.—OF THE CONTROVERSY ON GRACE (p. 234)

"The problem of the existence in man of a free will, at once real and stringently limited, must be great and urgent; but as Pelagians discussed it, it was associated with a virtually naturalistic idea of Redemption. We must also remember that there is, in reaction from Calvinism, a modern Pelagianism which regards Christianity simply as a means of moral elevation, and the doctrine of grace as a bit of unverifiable mysticism, and takes an inadequate measure of the gravity of sin. . . . St Augustine, in spite of some Augustinian exaggerations, stood for the idea of grace, with which we are familiar in the Collects, as the very life of God freely given to man in Christ, and Pelagianism, by giving inadequate senses to the term, lost sight of the truth that as man now is, he needs grace both to will and to do God's will."—*Church Quarterly Review*, July 1903.

NOTE V.—OF PASCAL'S "PROVINCIAL LETTERS" (p. 249)

The historian Guetté says that he has read the attacks on Port Royal by the Jesuits, and those of Port Royal on the Jesuits, and this is his impression: that the Jesuits treat the Port Royalists with an astonishing anger and injustice, and that they condescend to utter petty and coarse insults; in Port Royal polemics there may be some rather angry words and some indignant passages, but in general the tone is dignified, and worthy of the subject. Pascal is the one who has attacked them most vehemently, but if his "Provinciales" are compared to the libels of Père Garasse, it can be seen if the Jesuits have any right to complain of the insults of Port Royal.

NOTE V*a*. (p. 249)

Madame de Motteville says (*Mémoires*, vol. iv., p. 105): "Les pères Jésuites portent à juste titre le nom d'apôtres des Indes et de la Chine, puisqu'au prix de leur vie et de leur sang ils ont eu l'honneur, par tant de souffrances, de faire adorer le nom de Jésus Christ presque dans toute l'étendue de la terre, et particuliérement dans les contrées barbares où il n'etait point connu auparavant. C'est une compagnie qui a toujours été remplie de grands hommes, tant par leur science, que par leur piété, qui les a fait considérer comme des colonnes de l'Eglise; mais plusieurs des plus grands évêques de France et des plus estimés étoient les chefs de ceux qu'ils accusaient d'hérésie.

"Un de leurs pères, plein de vertu, et des plus renommés de notre siècle, parlant un jour à une dame de mes amies des contestations de ce temps là, qui étaient nées et fomentées entre les jansenistes et eux, il dit, sans blâmer les adversaires de sa compagnie, et avec un sentiment extrême de douleur qui lui faisait souhaiter ardemment l'union de tous les chretiens, que l'orgueil de l'esprit humain etoit la source de ces désordres, et qu'il prioit sans cesse Notre-Seigneur de tuer en lui et dans les autres cet ennemi mortel de ceux qui aspirent à la vie eternelle. Ce saint homme avoit raison d'en parler de cette manière ; car j'ai toujours ouï dire que ces contestations de doctrine avoient été causées par des animosités particulières."

NOTE VI.—Maîtres des Requêtes (p. 258)

Note.—So many friends of Port Royal were "Maîtres des Requêtes," that the following quotation may be interesting :—

"Les maîtres des requêtes étaient des personnages importants. On les trouve partout—au tribunal des 'Requêtes de l'hotel,' où étaient jugées les causes des officiers de la Couronne, des commensaux du Roi, et de toutes personnes qui avaient obtenu le privilège de cette jurisdiction spéciale ; au Parlement et au Grand Conseil ; chez le Chancelier, où ils rapportaient sur les lettres à sceller ; mais leur principal domicile était le Conseil des parties. Il y étudaient, pour les présenter, les affaires sans nombre comprises dans cette compétence sans limites.

"De plus, on les envoyait dans les provinces faire des enquêtes. En 1663-1664 des maîtres dresseront pour Colbert un état du Royaume.

"Un maître des requêtes était toujours en travail pour sortir de sa condition, qui n'était qu'un passage. 'Un abbé qui viellit' disait Saint Simon, 'un maître des requêtes demeuré, un vieux page, une fille ancienne, deviennent de tristes personnages.

"Le maître des requêtes aspirait à une intendance et au brevet de conseiller d'Etat."—Ernest Lavisse, *Histoire de France*, tome septième, p. 153.

NOTE VII. (p. 432)

St Simon says :—

"Harlai, Archevêque de Paris, né avec tous les talents du corps et de l'esprit, et s'il n'avait eu que les derniers, le plus grand prélat de l'Eglise, devoit s'être fait tout ce qu'il étoit ; mais de tels talents poussent toujours leur homme, et quand les mœurs n'y répondent pas, ils ne font qu'aigrir l'ambition ; sa faveur et sa capacité le faisoient aspirer au ministère, les affaires du Clergé, d'une part, et du roi, de l'autre, avec Rome, lui en avoient donné des espérances ; il comptoit que les Sceaux l'y porteroient et combleroient son autorité en attendant ; c'eut été un grand Chancelier ; il ne pouvoit être médiocre en rien, et cela même étoit redouté par le roi pour son Cabinet, et encore plus par ses ministres."

NOTE VIII.—The Affaire of the Régale (p. 439)

The King of France had always claimed the right of seizing the revenues of vacant Bishoprics, and the patronage of benefices in the diocese during the time of the vacancy (droit du régale). But the dioceses of the south of France were exempt from this. In 1673 the "régale" was made universal in France, and all the southern Bishops submitted except the Bishops of Alet and Pamiers.

Pope Innocent XI. took the side of the Bishops, and fulminated against Louis XIV. And by a strange reversal of the usual order of affairs, the Jesuits were on the side of the King, and the Port Royalists or Jansenists on the Papal side. This did not tend to make Louis more favourable to Port Royal. He grew more and more convinced that Port Royal was against him.

The strained relations between Louis and the Holy See lasted until 1693, when "l'Eglise de France rentra dans une situation normale."[1]

NOTE IX. (p. 459)

L'Abbé Guetté says, in his *Histoire de l'Eglise de France*:—

"Si l'on examine les grandes œuvres que l'école de Port Royal produites, on sera convaincu qu'elle n'entra dans les luttes sur la Grâce que pour répondre aux provocations de ses adversaires et qu'elle avait dans ses travaux un but plus élevé qu'elle poursuivait avec autant de science que d'energie, dès qu'on lui laissait quelque repos. Les *Objections d'Arnauld contre Descartes;* la *Perpetuité de la Foi;* les *Pensées de Pascal;* les *Principes de la Foi Chrétienne*, et tant d'autres livres moins célèbres, dans lesquels sont établies les verités fondamentales du Christianisme, attestent que l'école de Port Royal avait entrepris la guerre la plus active contra le rationalisme qui menaçait d'envahir la société depuis le XVI. Siècle."

NOTE X.—On M. de Tillemont (p. 464)

A writer in the *Church Quarterly*, July 1903, points out that Dr Bright (the eminent professor of Ecclesiastical History in the University of Oxford, 1868-1901) often referred to Tillemont, and the writer adds:—

"Tillemont's critical notes are, as has been said, remarkably judicious, clear and exact; the work is done with such minuteness and care, that nothing is passed over, and if we are told in the words of a modern religious encyclopædia that the labours of Louis Sebastien le Nain de Tillemont do not satisfy the present generation of scholarship, we must take leave to doubt whether contemporary scholars have yet done better."

[1] Martin, *Histoire de France*, p. 193.

NOTE XI. (p. 469)

About the bull, St Simon says :—

"Mais ce qui surprit étrangement, c'est que les religieuses des Champs se mirent en règle et se pourvurent à Rome, où elles furent écoutées. Comme la bulle de la constitution *Vineam Domini Sabaoth* n'y avait jamais été accordée pour détruire la paix de Clement IX., on n'y trouva point mauvais les difficultés de ces filles à la signer sans l'explication qu'elles offraient d'ajouter en signant, sans préjudice de la paix de Clement IX., à laquelle elles adhéroient. Ce qui étoit leur crime en France digne d'éradication et des dernières peines personelles parut fort innocents à Rome ; elles se soumettaient à la Bulle, et dans le même esprit qu'elle avait été donnée ; on n'y en vouloit pas davantage."

NOTE XII. (p. 472)—Saint Simon, opinions

"Le Père de la Chaise étoit d'un esprit mediocre, mais d'un bon caractère, juste, droit, sensé, sage, doux et moderé, fort ennemi de la delation, de la violence et des éclats. . . .

"Il ne voulut jamais pousser le Port Royal des Champs jusqu'à la destruction, ni entrer en rien contre le Cardinal de Noailles, quoique parvenu à tout sans sa participation ; le *Cas de Conscience*, et tout ce qui se fit contre lui de son temps, se fit sans la sienne. . . .

"Il eut toujours sur sa table le *Nouveau* Testament du Père Quesnel. . . ."

Of Pére Tellier, Saint Simon gives a terrible portrait. He says : "Sa vie étoit dure, par goût et par habitude ; il ne connaissoit qu'un travail et sans interruption il l'exigeoit pareil des autres, sans aucun égard et ne comprenoit pas qu'on en dût avoir. Sa tête et sa santé étoient de fer, sa conduite en étoit aussi, son naturel cruel et farouche. Confit dans les maximes et dans la politique de la Société, autant que la dureté de son caractère s'y pouvait ployer, il étoit profondément faux, trompeur, caché sous mille plis et replis. . . . C'étoit un homme terrible, qui n'alloit à rien moins qu'à destruction. . . ."

Saint Simon adds that Père Tellier was "ignorant à surprendre, insolent, impudent, ne connoissant ni monde, ni mesure, ni degrès, ni ménagements.

"Je me suis etendu sur ce nouveau confesseur, parce que de lui sont sorties les incroyables tempêtes sous lesquelles l'Eglise, l'Etat, le savoir, la doctrine, et tant de gens de bien de toutes les sortes, gémissent encore aujourd'hui. . . ."

One ceases to wonder, after reading this, that Port Royal was treated with revolting brutality.

Saint Simon tells a curious story, that Père la Chaise warned the king to choose a Jesuit confessor, reminding him in no very vague terms of the fate of Henri IV.—"as the Society contained all sorts of people !"

NOTE XIII.—The Servants of Port Royal (p. 476)

Port Royal was in especial the home of the poor ; within its walls was a collection of poor people, servants, shoemakers, gardeners, who partook of that spirit of sober piety, lifelong penitence, and devotion.

The *Vie Edifiante des Domestiques*, which is bound up in the *Histoire Abrégée de la dernière Persecution*, tells their story.

Pierre Bouchier, Leonard Fourmier, Étienne Gaudron, and several others, all simple unlearned peasants, who had been attracted to Port Royal, and who presevered when they were driven away, in their lives of prayer and work, all seem alike possessed by the love for the New Testament, the true cachet of Port Royal.

Pierre Moliar, who had been a gardener at Port Royal, in his will, after giving directions for his funeral and for the saying of Masses for his soul, and after some legacies to the poor, expresses a wish that any money that is left should be expended on New Testaments, to be distributed freely wherever they were needed.

NOTE XIV.—Cardinal Noailles's grief after the destruction of Port Royal (p. 477)

"Le Cardinal de Noailles," says St Simon, "en sentit l'enormité après qu'il se fut mis hors d'état de parer un coup qui avoit passé sa prévoyance et qui en effet ne se pouvoit imaginer."

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